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History of the church of  
Christ









HISTORY  
OF THE  
CHURCH OF CHRIST,  
FROM  
THE DIET OF AUGSBURG 1530,  
TO  
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

ORIGINALLY DESIGNED AS A CONTINUATION OF MILNER'S HISTORY.

BY  
HENRY STEBBING, D.D.

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*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

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VOL. I.

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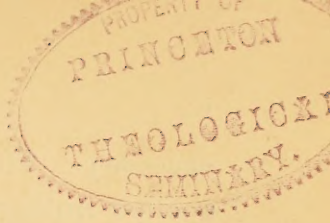
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THE Work which is now completed under the title of "The History of the Church of Christ, from the Diet of Augsburg," was commenced with the intention of simply furnishing a continuation of Milner's History of the Church of Christ. Anxious to afford as explicit a statement of facts and principles as his space would allow, the Author soon found himself compelled to follow his own course, and forget that he was a continuator. The period which he had to describe presented a wide field for fair inquiry; and it was felt that honesty of statement required a certain degree of independence, both as to style and method. Though, therefore, describing events in due course from the close of Milner's History, the present publication may be considered as a distinct Work, and as claiming to be judged according to its own character. Events have occurred since its commencement, from the influence

of which not even the most indifferent mind can be entirely free. The Author neither pretends nor desires to be unaffected by what is passing around him ; but he has plainly stated in the last Chapter what considerations have had the greatest weight with him ; and the Reader will thereby be enabled to judge generally how far he may place confidence in the fairness of his views and intentions.

London,  
October 27th 1842.





## P R E F A C E.

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THE present Volume contains the History of the Church of Christ, while still struggling for its rights against the tyranny of error and superstition. It has been the earnest wish of the Writer to avail himself of the best authorities on the period which he has had to describe ; and he has been equally desirous of resisting the influence of prejudice. What has appeared to him to be the truth he has freely stated, not concealing his own views on the important questions necessarily suggested by a subject of this nature. He trusts that the Reader will bear in mind, that the Church in earlier times might be contemplated with much greater ease, as distinct from the world, than in the times approaching our own ; and that this will afford a sufficient reason for his having entered more fully into the narrative of secular events than it would have been his wish to do, had not the proper statement, both of facts and opinions, rendered it

necessary. Though writing in continuation of another Author, he has endeavoured to plan his Work in such a manner as to render the narrative complete in itself. This will account for his having occasionally taken up a part of the subject at a somewhat earlier point than would otherwise have been the case.

With the Divine permission, the Second Volume will appear early in May.

London,

Dec. 7th, 1838.



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## CENTURY XVI.

### HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, FROM THE DIET OF AUGSBURG.

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#### CHAP. I.

PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION—DIET OF AUGSBURG—  
PROTESTANT CONFESSION—LUTHER AND MELANCTHON—  
THE APOLOGY.

THE History of Protestantism may be said to commence with the Diet of Augsburg. Nine years had now elapsed since Luther entered upon his eventful career. In that period, he had contended, face to face, with the most renowned champions of Rome, and had replied, either in public debate, or by his various writings, to most of the arguments urged in defence of its corruptions. The force of his reasonings had been acknowledged by minds of very different degrees of cultivation. Scholars celebrated for the extent of their erudition, and the elegance of their taste, were among the first of his disciples: but the artisan, and even the peasant, could sufficiently understand the nature of his views, and the principles on which they were established, to revere him as a teacher of truth and holiness. It took but a short time, therefore, to diffuse the lessons which he first taught in the schools, or from the pulpits, of Wittemberg, over the surrounding country. The clear good sense of his instructions was too powerfully contrasted with the obscure style of the prevalent theology not to strike any sincere inquirer after evangelical doctrine. He spoke to men as professing a religion,



the foundations of which they might understand; and the doctrines of which they ought to hear proved by the Word of God. There was a candour in all he said, which inspired confidence in the sincerity of his professions; and when it was found that success neither diminished his zeal, nor inflated him with pride, but that every day added to the vigour of his arguments, the most cautious grew bold in the profession of the truths which he had taught them.

Germany was better prepared than most of the continental nations to foster the principles of the Reformation. Her people enjoyed a considerable share of freedom, and their mental as well as moral characteristics were in sufficient harmony with the main features of Luther's own character to afford him an instinctive assurance of their speedy and steady sympathy.\* The political condition of the country was equally favourable to the designs of the reformers. It presented none of those formidable barriers to the progress of opinion which exist in undivided sovereignties. The chiefs of the several states were imperfectly acquainted with the relations in which they stood to each other, and to the Emperor. Possessing powers on which, with activity and ambition, they might have founded extensive monarchies, they were satisfied in the enjoyment of tranquillity, and the pomp and luxuries of their petty courts. If a desire of greater independence crossed their minds, or the proceedings of the Emperor awakened a momentary jealousy, the rising murmur was appeased by a reference to the bull of gold. Generation after generation manifested its conviction that there was no danger in this state of things. The people felt secured from any hidden act of oppression by the superior power

\* Luther speaks of the character of his countrymen in the Preface to the Commentary on the Galatians. While accusing them of want of steadfastness, he gives them credit for great ardour and courage in the commencement of important undertakings. This latter characteristic was well proved in the early stages of the Reformation, as he himself acknowledges. The decline of the fervour may be accounted for by many causes; but Luther might rejoice, even to the day of his death, in the comparative continuance of zeal. "*Quis diceret vir optimus,*" exclaims the most laborious of his historians, "*si nostros videret mores!*"—Seckendorf, *Comm. de Luther*, lib. III., sec. 13, p. 116.

of the Emperor ; and though liberty made no progress, nor opened any of those lofty views, which in subsequent periods roused the spirit of nations, they were inwardly gathering strength for a nobler struggle than the best of those fomented by politicians.

The fervor of Luther's zeal was not more remarkable than his judgment and prudence. Most other reformers have begun by proposing the demolition of existing systems, and have distinguished themselves rather by their wish to change, than their anxiety to improve and purify. Luther commenced by calling his hearers to the study of truth, and did not, at first, contemplate the necessity of any further alteration in the religion of the age, than such as might naturally follow the simple diffusion of intelligence. When fierce and gloomy intolerance resisted every attempt that was made to improve the state of the Church, to remove the burdens which superstition had heaped upon its bosom, then Luther gave the reins to his indignation, and he was urged forward in a spirit of hostility which soon lost sight of conciliation or compromise. But, in his boldest attacks upon the Papacy, in seasons when the fire of his zeal burnt the fiercest, he never forgot his duty to those whom he had undertaken to instruct in the gospel. To root up error, to pull down the strong walls by which its citadel was fortified, formed not his sole or ultimate object. He desired, like the Apostles of old, to convince men of their ignorance and folly, that he might immediately after lead them to the truth. In the midst, therefore, of all the turmoil of controversy, and while outwardly he appeared to be wholly occupied with the enemy, the best energies of his soul were engaged in preparing instruction for the members of his flock, or for those who in other provinces looked to his writings for consolation under sorrow and difficulty. He thereby appealed to the hearts and souls of his countrymen ; promoted the growth of thought, of spirituality and holiness ; opened a path through the labyrinths which had hitherto surrounded the temple of divine knowledge ; and completely changed the prospect which pre-

sented itself both to the man of learning and to the Christian.

Germany was now beginning to feel sensible of the mighty advantages thus derived from the teaching of Luther. It exhibited undoubted evidences of the alteration which had taken place in the minds of the people. There was a strength and energy in the tone of sentiment which prevailed, whether expressed in the language of literature and theology, or in the rude but earnest phraseology of the multitude. The meeting at Augsburg excited universal attention; and the vigour of the national spirit was proportioned to the importance and the interest of the season.

The actual and numerical force of the reformed party was already considerable. A strong disposition to secure the freedom, realized by Luther, existed among the people of Germany for some time before any of their princes conceived the notion of formally establishing an independent Church. The Electors of Saxony were the first to lay the foundations of the religious republic. The university which they had established at Wittemberg was the offspring of an enlightened and liberal policy, and the means employed for rendering the institution effective corresponded with the spirit in which it originated. Science and literature had found protectors in Germany not less ardent than those of Italy, and far more steady and judicious. In the former country they were pursued rather as luxuries than essentials; were viewed as if unconnected with religious truth, and in many cases led not simply to heresy, but to infidelity. The patronage of Leo X. was directed to the fulfilment of the elegant and tasteful designs which give so bright a splendour to the name and memory of the Medici. Poetry and philosophy were enshrined in St. Peter's, as affording readier archetypes to his idealism than the gospel, or the cross. It is true that the study of the classics, with a critical attention to the niceties of language, proved subsequently of the highest advantage to the cause of religion. But nothing was done by the pontifical patronage of learning which in any degree



approached the value or the grandeur of the work begun and completed under the auspices of Cardinal Ximenes.\* The Complutensian Polyglot was a production worthy of an age remarkable for its splendour and its enterprise; and had the cardinal's example been followed at Rome, where the publication was only tardily received, Christendom might indeed have been indebted to the Romish hierarchy for its protection of literature.†

The Germans, less luxurious, and more inclined to earnest inquiry than to the elegant speculations of the academy, entered upon the career of learning with stern and vigorous spirits. Some of their earliest efforts opened the stores of Hebrew philology. Rabbinical literature, hitherto enwrapped in the darkest mystery, began to be studied in the early part of the century by the celebrated Reuchlin, a professor in the university of Tübingen. This laborious scholar experienced the fiercest opposition to his efforts. The language of the New Testament had till lately been so little known, that a monk could venture, even in the university of Paris, to decry it as the nurse of heresy.‡ Hebrew was regarded with still greater dread; and Reuchlin heard it loudly proclaimed by his opponents, that by teaching men that language he would infallibly make them Jews. But notwithstanding the rude and persevering enmity with which the learned of these days were treated, they brought their designs to a sufficient degree of perfection to prevent the possibility of a return to ignorance. Germany was highly favoured in the character of its

\* This celebrated man owed his success in the patronage of literature to the no less distinguished Antonio de Lebrija, a professor in the university of Salamanca. Lebrija had for his companions in the preparation of the Polyglot, Fernando Nunez, Alfonso of Alcalá, and others of like repute. This great work was completed at Alcalá, in 1517.

† Private speculation appears to have led the way in undertakings of this kind in Italy. The Hebrew Pentateuch was printed at Bologna, as early as the year 1482; and in 1516, a polyglot edition of the Psalms was published at Genoa, by Pierpaolo Porro, a Milanese printer.—*Tiraboschi, Storia della Let. Ital. t. vi., lib. I., p. 169.*

‡ It was in the year 1458, that Greek literature began to be known in France. So little encouragement, however, did Gregory Tiphernas, the first professor, receive, that nearly half a century elapsed before the language was taught as a branch of education. Its cultivation might then be chiefly attributed to the patronage of Francis I., whose establishment of the College of France gave a new impulse to the cause of learning.



scholars. They were too strenuous, too sturdy, to be beaten back in their course. Several of the princes had the penetration to discover the nature of the movement so generally felt.\* Instead, therefore, of repressing, they fostered the rising intelligence. Schools were established in various parts of the country, which offered new means of instruction to the rising generation, and by the time Luther required the aid and sympathy of his fellow Germans, they were arrived at that degree of improvement at which the human mind is most inclined to enter fervently into the discussion of important topics.

While moral and religious force was thus timely supplied to the spiritual leader, the support necessary to the Elector of Saxony, as the first political patron of the Reformation, acquired daily greater consistency and influence. The Landgrave of Hesse, as early as the year 1525, was described by Luther as won to Christ, and burning with a holy zeal for the success of his gospel. This prince possessed both wealth and power, and his personal character, vehement and determined, rendered him a formidable opponent, and a trust-worthy ally. Next to him in influence, and superior in personal piety, was the Margrave of Brandenburg, who, from the year 1529, had employed his whole authority in promoting the Reformation, and establishing in his own dominions the best rules that could be devised for disseminating its blessings. Duke Ernest, of Luneberg, pursued a similar course; and the example set by these and other princes had been gladly followed by most of the free imperial towns, whose weight in the scale was better felt as the importance of general opinion became more clearly understood.

The changes effected in Prussia, by Albert, brother of the Margrave of Brandenburg, had afforded another

\* The awakening intelligence of the people might be seen, by an acute observer, in the character of the poetry which now began to be popular. Allegorical satire afforded them the safe means of painting the follies and vices of all classes of the community. Heinrich von Alkmar, Sebastian Brant, &c., who flourished at the close of the 15th century, and Johan von Morsheim, who wrote at the beginning of the Reformation, composed poems, the main object of which was to make every thing appear ridiculous which had not truth for its basis.—J. G. Eichorn, *Geschichte der Lit.* t. iv. p. 768.

great addition to the political force of the reformers. A vast body of powerful men was thereby allied to the interests of Luther, and an example given which taught the world that the ecclesiastic and civil dignities, united in one person, might be separated without danger to any interest which it was expedient to sustain.

Germany itself thus afforded sufficient proof that it would not leave the Reformation without support, when the strength of its principles should be put to some decisive trial. But the sympathy of foreign nations conferred advantages which could scarcely have been derived from a much more extensive accession to its internal resources. Not only had Denmark and Sweden, with other neighbouring states, gladly received the light, but England, France, and even Spain and Italy, abounded with followers of Luther and readers of the Bible. The reformers themselves gained all the assistance, from this extension of their principles, which belongs to the discovery that a cause is not selfish or national only, but universal. Their enemies had every reason to tremble at this undefined enlargement of the boundary within which the nature of the design seemed originally to confine it. It was not as if many fires had been lit at the same time, each of which might be separately extinguished by caution and energy: there were signs of a general conflagration; it could no longer be said how far the train extended, with which it began, or what province might be next shaken by its explosion.

The determined opposition which the Protestants offered to the decree passed at Spire had irritated the pride and confounded the policy of the Emperor's brother, Ferdinand. A succession of conferences with the Pope, at Bologna, did not tend to improve the feelings of Charles in respect to the reformers. Whatever might be the solidity of his views in certain junctures of political difficulty, he never saw clearly the path which, in the affairs of religion, both duty and expediency might have taught him to pursue. He was thus exposed, in a far greater degree than his strength of mind would have led us to expect, to the subtle machinations of the pontifical court. The pomp of his

coronation, the impressive associations which that august ceremony awoke in his imagination, the loyalty which the hierarchy, in its antient grandeur, expressed on the occasion, all assisted to infect his thoughts with fresh dislike to a party which refused to acknowledge the authority, or share in the splendour, of the Church.

But, notwithstanding the unpromising appearances which things presented at the close of the late meeting, and the little encouragement afforded by the movements of the Emperor, some of the more ardent of the reformers cherished a hope that peace might yet be established by his intervention. It was currently reported that he had used both authority and eloquence to overcome the vindictive hostility of the Pope.\* The fact, perhaps, is less disputable than the result. Charles, it is reasonable to believe, would have preferred securing the good will of Clement, without endangering his popularity with the German Protestants, to placing himself, as a Papist, in direct collision with that now powerful and influential body. But his bearing in the Diet affords no foundation for the idea that he had formed any serious intention of supporting the cause of the Protestants against the pretensions of the Roman Church. The too great earnestness of Clement in pressing their destruction might have awakened his suspicions, or offended his feelings as a sovereign; but no sooner did he find himself on the road from Bologna to Augsburg than he threw aside the tolerance which rendered him formidable to the Pontiff, and reassumed the stern aspect of a monarch who remembered no rival but the free consciences of his people.†

\* Some authors report, on the authority of Cœlestin, the whole of the discourse which is said to have passed between the Pope and the Emperor; but Cœlestin acknowledges that he only wrote from what he knew of the heads of the conference. "*Quamvis orationis exemplum desideretur, non est tamen nobis obscurum et ignotum, hæc ipsius præcipua capita fuisse, et clarissimum virum in hanc fere sententiam verba fecisse.*"—Cœlest. t. I., f. 10.

† Charles had not been in Germany for eight years, when the pressure of affairs thus compelled him to turn his attention to the condition of the empire. He saw the necessity of excusing this absence in the opening address to the Diet.—Sleidan, t. i., liv. VII., p. 280.



The city of Augsburg enjoyed preeminent rank among the antient and noble towns of Germany. Its inhabitants were wealthy and enlightened; and, though still observing the ordinances of the established religion, had already begun to exhibit proofs of their sympathy with the leaders of the Reformation. The Emperor made his public entry into this city on the thirteenth of June, and was accompanied by his brother Ferdinand and Cardinal Campegio. A multitude of princes, deputies, and dignified ecclesiastics awaited his arrival. The Elector of Saxony had been there some weeks, and with him were Melancthon, Spalatin, and Justus Jonas, to whom he and the other protestant princes had resolved to commit the doctrinal explanation and defence of their principles against the attacks of the popish divines.

An opportunity speedily occurred for trying the temper of the two parties. It happened that the Emperor arrived on the eve of one of the most solemn festivals of the Roman Church. Charles desired the attendance of the reformers, and in a manner which left little room to doubt that he would regard their refusal as an indication of the course they intended to pursue. Neither the Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, nor any other of the party, shrunk from the test. "We cannot," said they, "attend the ceremony with safe consciences;" and in this resolution they persevered, the procession being in vain delayed long beyond the appointed time, to afford them the opportunity of changing their determination.\*

The lively interest which these distinguished men were taking in the progress of the Reformation, had a sound and noble foundation in their love of the divine word. They had, therefore, brought several of the most learned of their theologians with them, not only to assist in the discussions which should arise in the Diet, but that they and their followers might not be deprived of the teaching of the gospel during their stay

\* It has been conjectured, and with an air of probability, that Charles chose the day before this festival for his entrance into Augsburg, with the express intention of putting the reformers to an immediate proof.—Pfizer, *Luther's Leben*, p. 625, Stuttgart 1836.



at Augsburg. They were encouraged to believe that much good was the result of this proceeding. The people of Augsburg had listened with pleasure to the evangelical addresses of the preachers; and no argument appears to have been urged, which could prove that the Protestants violated any principle of truth or charity in this exercise of their zeal. But when the Emperor desired the attendance of the princes in the procession, he also intimated that they must silence their preachers; a command which, it was respectfully said, threatened to contradict the very design of the Diet, convened, as it had been, to consider whether there was any thing wrong or heretical in those who were thus forbidden to exercise their functions. Charles could not be blind to the propriety of this remark; and two days after an ordinance was issued which imposed silence on the controversialists of both parties, and committed the office of preaching to persons said to be uninfected by the prejudices of either. There is too much reason to believe, that the consequence of this agreement was simply that of depriving the people altogether of useful instruction. We learn from the correspondence of Spalatin and the Elector, that the preachers appointed, contented themselves with making a few common-place observations on the lessons of the day, which could neither awaken nor comfort the hearts of the hearers; that their discourses had no tincture of evangelical truth or heavenly consolation. It is not to be doubted that, in ordinary circumstances, many teachers may be found who can convey the most important lessons of the gospel without awakening a thought of controversy; but we know not how, in times like those described, an earnest believer in the gospel could have preached its doctrines, purely and freely, without violating the imperial command. There was, therefore, perhaps, no alternative but to select men who, unmoved by the controversy, because indifferent to the solemn interests of their religion, could well afford to impose silence on themselves for whatever season their superiors might name.

Another circumstance of a still more suspicious nature marked the proceedings of the Emperor on his

arrival in Augsburg. The citizens, looking with some feeling of alarm to the presence of such a vast concourse of strangers, had organized a civic guard, whose duty it was to protect the town from any sudden ebullition of popular feeling, or injurious proceeding on the part of their guests; Charles, jealous of every movement which did not originate in his own orders, immediately directed that this guard should be disbanded, and replaced it, to the no slight vexation of the citizens, and the Protestants, by a strong party of his own troops.

On the morning of the 20th, the day appointed for opening the Diet, the Elector was summoned to attend his Imperial Majesty at mass. This formed part of his customary duties as grand marshal of the empire, and it is somewhat difficult to account for the circumstance, that the summons appears to have thrown both the Elector himself and his associates into momentary embarrassment.\* They could not be ignorant that Charles might claim this mark of official respect; nor was it to be supposed that, at such a time, the strictness of ancient formality would be relaxed in favour of a separatist from the Church. We can only suppose, that a hope was entertained that attention to ceremonies might be somewhat diminished by the all-engrossing importance of the subjects about to be discussed; or that the Elector and his friends, closely intent on preparing for the debate, might themselves forget the difficulty in which, having refused to attend the previous ceremony, they were likely to be placed.

It immediately appeared, by the manner in which the Elector was summoned, that to refuse would be to precipitate events, and, perhaps, inflict a vital injury on the cause of the Reformation. After some discussion, therefore, it was decided, that the Elector ought to attend as required, and that in doing so, in his official capacity, he might vindicate himself from any charge of impiety, by the permission given in old time to Naaman the Syrian. His scruples being thus removed, Frederic bore the sword of state in the magnificent service which preceded the opening of the Diet. The only

\* Seckendorf, lib. II., sec. 63. p. 167. Sleidan, t. i. liv. VII. p. 279.

Protestant who attended, besides himself, was the Marquis of Brandenburg; and the reformers considered that they had hereby consulted sufficiently the duty which they owed to their own consciences, and the respect due to the head of the empire.

Never had the German Diet been opened under circumstances more fraught with interest than the present. The progress of the Turks threatened Europe with all the horrors of a fresh return to barbarism. Christendom itself groaned already under many of the evils of intestine war. Political discord and religious jealousies, while they prevented the cure of wounds thus inflicted, seemed every day gathering strength to inflict more; and the friends of religion and humanity, in proportion to their acquaintance with the true state of affairs, saw great reason to dread that none of the measures at present in contemplation would tend to any thing but an increase of the danger.

The reformers were advanced in courage and readiness to suffer, beyond the immediate necessity of the case. "I would rather lose my head than violate the sanctity of the gospel," exclaimed George of Brandenburg, as he knelt before the Emperor, and refused to attend the above-mentioned procession. "No! no!" rejoined Charles; "we will have no cutting off of heads." But, lightly as he passed over this sudden burst of devotion on the part of the Marquis, his practised glance might discover in the circumstance, that, to whatever extent he should push his prerogative, or however the hierarchy of Rome might multiply anathemas and persecutions, there was a spirit in the heart of Protestantism which had long since calculated, and prepared for, the expenses of the struggle upon which it was entering. No expectation of peace, therefore, was likely to be realized which had not a better basis than the notion, that the reformers might be persuaded or terrified into giving up any of their principles.

As little reason, on the other hand, was there to hope that the Emperor and the court of Rome might be induced to lower their demands. Viewing the state of affairs from the calm heights of theoretical contempla-



tion, it is easy to discern how much benefit would have been conferred both on the Church and empire, could their rulers have looked at events from the same position. But they saw things through a medium which would allow no ray of light to reach them pure and unbroken. Political wisdom had as yet taught no rules of action, given no glimpse of those important generalizations which have since struck awe into the souls of mere warriors and diplomatists. A rude, coarse driving of particular interests, a cunning or tyrannical execution of temporary plans, distinguished the career of the most celebrated men of this period. Charles V. was superior to many of his cotemporaries in the statesmanship of his age; but he had too much both of ambition and of caution to act on those better principles, the uncertain forms of which would every now and then flit before his eyes.

The Roman Pontiff was still less able to take that comprehensive view of things which might have inclined him to alter his present course. He had forgotten every other interest in that of the Church over which he presided; and if ever a doubt assailed his mind as to the expediency of his policy, it was speedily silenced by the long-received maxim, that the Church of Rome was in every respect co-extensive with the Christian world. Pomp and ambition, the management of political contests, the cabals of his own court, the hopes and fears inspired by late events, all contributed to assist the blinding effects of the errors more peculiarly incident to the Roman See.

If these considerations be duly weighed, we shall see reason to express comparatively little surprise at the proceedings instituted to oppose the Reformation. Let it be once perceived, that the only motives of sufficient force to counterbalance worldly interests must be drawn from the gospel; and that the gospel had been set aside or corrupted, and it will be easy to understand how unlikely it was that either the Emperor or Pope Clement would act otherwise than he did. No expectation, in short, could be entertained of present tranquillity, unless the sedate firmness of the Protestants



should render it apparently expedient to grant them religious freedom. That it was scarcely probable such an argument would be appreciated by men in their present temper may be understood from the language which both the Pope and the Emperor were accustomed to employ in support of their authority. Momentous, therefore, was the business which the Diet had now in hand. Claims were to be adjusted which had never before been heard of or disputed, and a rule of action instituted for which reasons were to be sought in a grander, sublimer code than had ever yet been made the test of political decisions.

The religious solemnities having been concluded, the Emperor, surrounded by the princes and nobles of the empire, proceeded to the hall in which they were to hold their consultations. After a brief introduction from the Count Palatine, the customary address of the Emperor was read to the meeting, and the reasons stated which led to his regarding the present juncture of affairs with equal interest and anxiety. There was little in this address which might not have been anticipated, or which could have failed to preoccupy the minds of the members of the Diet as a matter of personal concern. Few things, indeed, are more calculated to excite surprise than the manner in which Charles addressed the princes of the empire, when it is considered that they had at least as great an interest as he had in preserving its integrity. They could neither be ignorant of, nor indifferent to, the progress of the Turks. If the threatened invasion endangered the dignity of the imperial crown, it also threatened the several princes of Germany with the total loss of their states, and the people with that of liberty and life. The arguments, therefore, which Charles derived from the approach of the enemy, and which he trusted might subdue the present religious discontents, had doubtlessly been already deeply weighed in the minds of his auditors. Not a Protestant, any more than himself, could have looked with calmness at the prospect of being enslaved by the infidel, or seeing his country ravaged by hosts of barbarians. The body of enlightened men whom he addressed on this subject

had, in fact, well considered the whole matter, and neither threats nor persuasions were likely to influence them, unless grounded on motives which violated no demand of their consciences, or principle of righteousness.

Charles concluded his address by a reference to the decree passed at Worms, which, had it been obeyed, he said, would have saved the country from all the evils that had so long oppressed it; and to its violation, he contended, might be attributed not only the general evils of dissension, but all the atrocities perpetrated by the Anabaptists and the revolted peasantry.\*

The meeting of the assembly on the 24th was distinguished by the harangue of Cardinal Campegio, and the replies of the Protestant princes. In the rhetorical language of the legate, Charles was a sovereign who might command the veneration and obedience of his subjects, not less by his virtues than his authority. The Pope was lauded in a similar style for his paternal attachment to the great body of the German people, and his anxiety to promote their happiness by every means in his power, that is, should they prove themselves willing to submit to his fatherly admonitions.

It has rarely, perhaps, been better proved than it was on this occasion, that the wisdom of courts and politicians is but a bad match for the simple energies of right-minded and pious men, who are not unwilling to endure a contest for the sake of God, and the manifold interests of truth. The Protestants were generally prepared, by long previous consideration, for the arguments which might be brought against their pure, scriptural doctrines; but they had the wisdom not to trust to generalities in the hour of trial and excitement. The meeting of the Diet had been made the subject of frequent deliberation; and the whole force of the party, in power of inquiry, experience and biblical erudition, was employed in these counsels. Immediately after the breaking up of the Diet at Worms, the leaders of the Protestants formed the resolution of putting their doctrines and opinions into a definite shape. Luther was consulted, with all the confidence and affection which

\* Seckendorf, lib. II., sec. 64, p. 168. Sleidan, t. i. liv. VII., p. 283.

properly belonged to his paternal character. The most urgent of those who pressed this undertaking was the Elector of Saxony, who could only be persuaded to attend the Diet at Augsburg on the ground that he was prepared to give a sound and consistent answer respecting the faith that was in him. A series of articles had been drawn up at the meeting at Smalcalde the preceding year. They were framed by Luther, and were presented to the Elector, at Torgau, on the road to Augsburg. Respect for the Emperor seemed to forbid the appearance of Luther in the Diet, and he accordingly took leave of the Elector and his friends at the little fortress of Coburg. Melancthon, therefore, was charged with the important duty of seeing that the articles thus prepared might be presented at the proper season; and, revised by him, they formed the basis of the Confession, which is still known as the standard of German Protestantism.\*

As nearly a month elapsed between the arrival of the Elector, and that of the Emperor, at Augsburg, Melancthon and his associates enjoyed ample opportunities of considering the articles which they thus adopted as their rule of faith. Contrary to the wishes of Luther, a rude copy of the instrument had made its way into the world, and the adverse party took advantage of the circumstance to publish it as his confession of faith, and with a confutation of its supposed abuses and heresies. Luther replied to this attack with his accustomed energy; and Melancthon wrote his celebrated Apology, founded on the materials furnished him in the articles. In his answer to the letter which contained a copy of the Apology, Luther says,† ‘ I have read the Apology. It pleases me well; and I do not see how I could alter or improve any thing in it, even were any alteration needed;

\* Pfizer *Luther's Leben*, p. 621.

† Briefe. The affectionate and reverential feeling of the Elector for Luther was strongly evinced in the letters which he addressed to him soon after his arrival at Augsburg: “ Well-beloved and honoured Doctor,” says he, in one of them, “ I trust you are contented and happy where you are, and that time may not hang long on your hands. We are all greatly concerned for your health. May God preserve you for the sake of his dear word. We intreat you also to take all possible care of yourself. Doctor Jasper, our physician, sends you some medicine by the bearer of this, and which will strengthen both your head and heart; for he is your true friend.”—De Wette, t. iv. p. 17.



for I could not tread so light and gently as Melancthon does. May our Lord Christ help us, that much fruit may be produced, as we hope and pray !”

The most important meeting of the Diet was held on Friday, the 24th of June. When it came to the turn of the Protestants to address the Emperor, they begged permission to read the document in which were expounded the principles of their belief. Charles hesitated, and directed that the instrument should be simply deposited in his hands. To this it was rejoined, that the subject in dispute had intimate relation to the peace, the property, the character, and even the souls, of all whom it concerned; and that they, therefore, had a right to claim the privilege of being heard, and of explaining the principles on account of which they were accused of disloyalty and heresy.\*

It was not till after considerable hesitation that Charles consented to this reasonable request; but the point being at length gained, the reformers next day presented their statement of doctrine, and unfolded the reasons on which they justified their separation from the Church of Rome.† It was evident, from the tone and spirit of their proceedings, that a plan had been formed, against which the efforts of the adverse party would avail nothing so long as they remained united, and faithful to themselves. Charles, therefore, lost no time in putting into practice that species of policy which formed the favourite resource of the statesmen of his age. Anxious to separate, if possible, the deputies of the cities represented in the Diet from the protestant princes, he summoned them to his presence, and used his utmost influence to persuade them to assent to the decree which had been passed at Spire;

\* Sleidan, t. i., liv. VII., p. 283.

† An unworthy and undignified effort had been made to lessen the effect likely to be produced by the Protestants. The present meeting took place in the smaller apartment used for the assembly, to prevent the concourse of people; but the chancellor read so loud, that his voice was heard by the multitude who thronged the avenues to the building. There were also two copies of the Confession; the one in Latin, the other in German. The Emperor would have had the former read, but Pontanus insisted that on German ground German must be allowed.—Seckendorf, lib. II. sec. lxxv. p. 170.



but they were prepared to imitate their allies in Christian firmness and prudence. Their answer to the Emperor was plainly indicative of a determination not to recede a step from the advance which had been made towards the attainment of Christian liberty. To convince him still more definitively of their resolution, they sent in a paper, containing an exposition of their views and intentions, similar to that already presented in the name of the protestant princes.

The impression made on the minds of both parties by the conduct of the Elector and his associates was highly favourable to the interests of the Protestants. Their enemies were awed by the dignity of their demeanour and the clearness of their views : those who favoured them saw with admiration that the basis on which they stood was the indestructible truth of God, and that they sought no better support than his sanction and his blessings. The whole body of assembled princes, bishops and deputies, listened in profound silence while Pontanus, the Elector's chancellor, pronounced the noble composition of Luther and Melancthon. Various emotions had occupied their hearts during the proceedings ; but it was impossible for any of them to remain unawed, as he said to the Emperor, on presenting a copy of the Confession : " This is our belief, sire ; and, with God's help and grace, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."\*

Charles being now in possession of the opinions of the Protestants, and finding that no ordinary resource of power or policy was likely to prevail against them, placed the copy of the Confession in the hands of the catholic princes, and demanded their advice. The princes were no better qualified than the Emperor himself to contend with the solemn and well-stated truths contained in the instrument before them. They therefore called in the assistance of their theologians, the bitterest enemies of the reformers which could have been selected from the ranks of the Roman Catholic

\* The Confession was signed by the Elector of Saxony, the prince, his son, the Landgrave of Hesse, the Marquis of Brandenburg, and three other princes, together with the deputies of Nuremberg and Reutlingen.

controversialists,—Eckius, Faber, John Cochläus, and others inferior in talent, but not in virulence.

Rarely have men been placed in a worse position for judging of the truth than were the catholic theologians at Augsburg. They came full of the ordinary prejudices of their school; and, at the present moment, skill in disputation was at a price which might have awakened ambition in minds not commonly subject to its evil influences. The rewards of conquest would be the favour of the Pope, of the Emperor, and of the innumerable ecclesiastical potentates whose dignities and repose seemed to depend on the issue of the contest. It was evident to all, that could convincing arguments now be brought, they would be worth more than the power of either the sword or the sceptre. Men do not usually think less than others of their own importance when particular events or circumstances elevate them into consequence; nor is it easy for them to separate the consideration of the controversy or its issue from that of its possible influence on their own fortune. The catholic theologians at Augsburg were singularly exposed to temptations, resulting from causes of this kind. They had to carry on the dispute in which they were concerned, in the presence of those whose smile might raise them to the highest rank in their profession. Whatever fame they already possessed was at stake; and if they should either be defeated in reality, or be led to shrink from the contest by any misgivings of doubt, the ruin of the brightest worldly prospects must necessarily follow.\*

The protestant divines had less to tempt them to prevaricate, if their consciences should lead to an unexpected discovery of error in their party or their argument. They had nothing to expect from persisting in the support of the Reformation, nor any thing to dread from forsaking their present associates. The

\* Both Faber and Eckius claimed a reward, at the breaking up of the Diet, for the refutation of the Protestant Confession. This was granted, and the former received, though not till twelve years after, through the influence of King Ferdinand, the bishopric of Vienna. Thus, it has been observed, was fulfilled the witty saying of Erasmus, "that Luther, while he kept himself wretchedly poor, made every body else rich."—Sleidan, t. i., liv. VII., p. 303.

princes who favoured the cause had little opportunity of providing for numerous scholars and divines. None of the prizes which might tempt ambition were as yet at their disposal; and the only conceivable human motive which could induce them to act against their apprehension of the truth, was a certain degree of pride, petulance or obstinacy, a motive to perseverance in error less common in itself than the expectation of profit, and wholly foreign to the mental and moral character of such men as Melancthon, Justus Jonas, or Spalatin.

To assert that the Roman divines would have been induced by merely selfish considerations to violate their consciences, would be a rash and uncharitable assumption; but that the circumstances in which they stood were not favourable to a rigorous war against prejudice, or that their preconceived notions and hatred to the Protestants might be aided by their personal position, is an opinion for which we may find support in the most common workings of the human mind and human passion.

It was under these, at least presumed, disadvantages, that Eckius and his associates sat down to the examination of the Confession. The candid inquirer after truth is well aware that in no human composition ought a perfect freedom from error to be expected; nor need the scholar be reminded that it is one of the most common practices of the sophist to reason from the presence of error in some few and immaterial points of an argument, to the rejection of the whole. Both Faber and Eckius, it is said, employed their efforts to prevent the Protestants from obtaining a hearing in the Diet; but as they had not succeeded in this attempt, they were now to grapple, as well as they could, with the statements exposed to their investigation.

Nearly six weeks were spent in the preparation of an answer to the simple and powerful document presented by the reformers. Some anxiety prevailed respecting the nature of this reply, and many urgent requests were made for an early copy of the paper; but these were cautiously eluded, and it was not till the answer



was publicly read that the Protestants obtained the desired satisfaction. The Confutation, when thus made known, wholly dissipated any apprehension which might have been entertained respecting its controversial importance. "Never," says Melancthon, in a letter to Luther, "was a weaker or more contemptible composition put forth. The example of the sons of Eli is the only argument employed against communion in both kinds, and to prove that the laity ought to be contented with the bread alone. Camerarius, on returning from hearing it read, (for I was not present,) said that I had tormented myself in vain with the argument respecting traditions, for that nothing of the kind had entered the thoughts of our adversaries."

A feeling of triumph was general among the Protestants at this proof of argumentative weakness among their enemies. "All good and wise men," it was said, "are wonderfully animated with hope at discovering the puerile character of the Confutation." The unwillingness of the Emperor to allow the paper to be published may probably be accounted for by these statements of its inefficiency.\* That he would have suppressed it from any feeling of tenderness for the Protestants, or from a wish to stop the controversy, can scarcely be supposed; for, had this been the case, he would hardly have endeavoured to rouse the energies of the Catholic divines to renew the debate. A refutation could be of little use, if kept within the circle of those who had no doubts respecting the infallibility of their Church; but Charles had sufficient acuteness of mind to discover that it was far better to leave a weak refutation in mysterious secrecy than attempt to obtain for it a factitious popularity. The language employed was well calculated to serve the purpose for which it was written, could severity and proud phraseology atone for essential weakness of reasoning. Even the princes who directed the labours of the polemics seem to have feared the bad effects likely to result from some of the intemperate

\* Charles had taken particular care to prevent the circulation of the Confession. Immediately after its being read, he desired the protestant princes to sign a promise that they would neither alter it, nor allow it to be printed. —Melancthon, *Epist.* p. 16, a Peucero, 1570.



expressions so lavishly scattered amid abortive syllogisms. To subdue, not to irritate, was the proper aim of the Pope, the Emperor, and all others concerned in this important crisis of public affairs. Of this Faber and Eckius had unfortunately lost sight; and it was probably to their want of political penetration, of due attention to this point, that we may ascribe the coldness and doubt with which their labours appear to have been received.\* Their want of judgment was subsequently rendered still more conspicuous, to those who had any insight into affairs, by the temperate style of the Apology, and the known sentiments of its supporters. Melancthon had purposely left unnoticed many points which were stated in the writings of Luther with the characteristic vigour of his pen. This circumstance was not passed over by the Emperor, and he closely questioned the princes whether they were willing to abide by the sentiments of the Apology, and restrict their complaints to the statements which it contained. Their answer was, "We are desirous of peace, and have here spoken of those things only which weigh heaviest on our consciences; but we are prepared, if our adversaries desire contention, to defend ourselves with further reasons drawn from the Book of God."\*

But Charles could not now retrace his steps, and it only remained for him to lessen, if possible, the difficulties by which he was surrounded. His first step was to see that the Confutation did not go forth with that rude fierceness of aspect which it wore at the beginning. Before, therefore, it was read to the Protestants, some few of the worst expressions were softened, and the danger seemed diminished. The next step was to prevent the circulation of the document, and this, it was supposed, might be accomplished by the command that the copy given to the Protestants should remain strictly confined to the circle of those present at the Diet. But in neither respect did the Emperor prove successful. The Confutation disgusted all right-minded men by the intolerance and haughtiness of its language; and so determined were the Protestants not to let it be supposed

\* Sleidan, t. i., liv. VII., p. 285.

that they were confuted without enabling men to compare the arguments on both sides, that they refused the copy offered them on the condition of secrecy, and contented themselves with the report which had been hastily taken in the assembly.

Charles had yet another resource. The Elector of Saxony required the formal grant of his ancestral dignity from the head of the empire. It was now signified to him, that if he persevered in his opposition to the proceedings of the Diet, the right which he inherited might be formally and effectually disputed. Even this did not succeed. The prince had too strong a conviction of the stability of law and justice in Germany to be terrified at what appeared but an indecent threat. He had, however, so well calculated the possible cost of a pure profession and a conscience void of offence, that the loss of his dominions would have been regarded as of less consequence than that of the gospel, and the happy influences which it exercised on his own heart, and on the hearts of his people.

During no period of the Reformation, perhaps, was the struggle between the two parties more productive of strong characteristic traits than in the present. Charles came from Bologna, wrought upon by the papal spirit as intensely as it was possible for a mind like his to receive impressions from its influence. Cardinal Campegio was, both in experience and capacity, in eloquence and acuteness, one of the most skilful representatives of the Roman court; while Faber, Eckius, and their companions united more vigour of thought, more readiness in the mere business of controversy, than any other divines that could have been selected from the catholic schools of theology. The point at which the feelings and energies of this powerful party were now called into exercise, was that on which the destinies of the Church seemed for the instant to depend; and there was nothing, accordingly, which could be said, done, or thought, which did not tend to prove their consciousness of their responsibility and their power.

On the side of the Protestants were ranged the divines in whose writings and discourses the Reform-

ation, as a system, received its first and clearest development. Melancthon, Justus Jonas and Spalatin could view with more calmness than Luther the plan which had been almost unconsciously traced by his wonderful and ever-energizing mind. They were, in some senses, less responsible, as well as less impetuous; capable of being more minute and correct in their views, because inferior in force and grandeur of original conception. This increased instead of diminishing their fitness for the task to which they were now called. But as their opponents came full of the fresh enthusiasm generated in the council-chambers of Bologna, so did they appear amid the members of the Diet animated with the recollection of their intrepid leader; instructed by the precepts which sprung living from the spirit within him, and armed at all points with the conviction that to act according to his intentions and example, they must indeed be servants of Christ, and messengers of his universal Church. Thus qualified for their work, thus distinguished by a mingled temperance of personal feeling, and an ingrafted energy of resolution, they displayed a rare combination of excellencies in the conduct of the business before them. But they were not free from the defects which belong to human nature, even in its best forms. There was an occasional manifestation of impatience; an appearance of fear for the results of their undertaking, as if its success depended on the determinations of men, or could be thwarted by their opposing counsels. Luther watched with anxiety the proceedings of his friends, and lamented that they could not all, like him, rejoice in hope, and be patient in tribulation. The letters of Melancthon drew from him many exclamations of sorrow. He would have had him present a lion front to their enemies, and awe if he could not subdue.

The calm and dignified conduct of the Elector of Saxony contributed greatly to raise the spirits of his party. His early arrival at Augsburg had done much to lessen the haughty confidence of their opponents, and the unflinching firmness with which he maintained his position, amid all discouragements, still further tended



to encourage a feeling of hope in the hearts of his friends. It would have been well for the party, had all acted according to the example of this pious and right-minded prince. But the Landgrave of Hesse, ever impetuous in his movements, uninfluenced by the more solemn and sobering feelings which wrought on the Elector, viewed only the present, and followed the first dictates of his passion. To his mind the conduct of the Emperor presented reasons for the strongest indignation and alarm. He imagined that his party was not only insulted, but on the point of being betrayed into irretrievable ruin; and that on his own immediate escape depended the solitary means of succour left for its deliverance. With these views of the state of affairs, he prepared his attendants for a hasty departure, and soon after passed like a fugitive through the secret gate of the city.

Surprise and anger were visible in the countenance of the Emperor, when he heard of the sudden departure of the Landgrave.\* The worst consequences might, it was plain, be apprehended, should the other protestant members of the Diet act in the same disrespectful and suspicious manner. It may be conjectured that the feelings which now rose in the breast of Charles, had no small share in determining his conduct towards the Landgrave at a later period. Nothing, in fact, can be more dangerous than to behave towards those who may have our fate in their hands as if we suspected them. If the sleeping lion be roused, the only chance of safety depends on our continuing to look him fairly in the face.

An order from Charles, directing that the secret gate of the city should henceforth be strictly guarded, and that no person should be allowed to pass through it

\* From a letter of Melancthon to Luther, we learn that neither he nor any of his associates was aware of the Landgrave's intention. "I can fairly affirm," he says, "that I know nothing of the Landgrave's counsels; but, irritated at the present state of affairs, he seems to have cast off all hopes of peace."—Melancthon, Ep. p. 17. The pretence set forth as the cause of the prince's sudden departure was the sickness of his wife; but this would not account for the secrecy with which he acted. Melancthon makes no allusion to this.



without especial permission, was the first proof of his vexation at what had occurred. This was yet further manifested by his summoning the Elector and the other protestant princes into his presence, and exacting of them a promise that they would not leave Augsburg till the business of the Diet was brought to a conclusion. In acceding to this request, they apologized for the flight of the Landgrave, but at the same time remonstrated, in strong and earnest terms, against the affront they received from guards being posted at the gates,—a measure, it was said, which could not be authorized by the practice of any former Diets, or by any law of the empire. Charles felt that he had gone too far in this matter; and, assuring the princes that he was willing to yield as much as was in his power to their wishes, excused his placing guards at the gates on the plea that it was to protect the citizens, and promised that he would do so no more, unless with the consent of the marshal of the empire.

Thus far the immediate apprehensions of those who dreaded the effects of these new causes of dispute were considerably allayed. The Emperor, moreover, gave an additional proof of milder temper by promoting a meeting of the heads of the two parties, with the professed hope that they might now be inclined to more conciliatory sentiments.

But if Charles himself did for the moment cherish thoughts of quieting the storm by gentler counsels, the persons with whom he acted appear to have been as far as ever from entertaining any such views. On the 7th of August, Joachim, Elector of Brandenburg, addressed the principal members of the two parties in a speech calculated to re-awaken the worst spirit of opposition. Melancthon describes this speech as full of rhetorical flourishes, and intended to terrify them out of the profession of the reformed doctrines. The manner in which the Elector of Saxony was treated, is reprobated in still stronger terms. It appears to have been plainly intimated to him, that, unless he abjured his faith, the Emperor would push the affair to extremities,

and free his subjects from the danger of heresy by depriving their ruler of his dignity and life.\*

Such, it seems, was the vehemence with which this threat was uttered, that the Elector, notwithstanding his usual calmness, remained not unmoved at the alternative which it presented to his imagination. He was for the moment, it is said, so bewildered and astonished, that on returning to his apartments, he informed the divines who accompanied him that he expected nothing more than the fulfilment of the threat, and that the Emperor would probably use measures against him which must involve not only himself but his subjects in distress and ruin. But recovering his firmness almost as soon as this expression of fear and amazement had escaped him, he once more asserted his willingness to do or bear any thing, rather than violate the duty which he owed to the gospel and to God.

On the 9th of the month the Protestants declared, in presence of the assembled princes, that the partiality of the Emperor subverted the intentions for which the Diet had assembled. It was not, they said, to hear sentence passed in favour of one side, but to see the claims of each fairly considered, that they were summoned to the meeting. To this remonstrance were added many complaints concerning the particular acts of unfairness, to which allusion has been made, and an earnest entreaty that the summoning of a council, no mention of which had yet been heard, might not be longer neglected or deferred.

The answer to these complaints was as unsatisfactory as any of the preceding attempts to convince the Protestants that they ought to resign their faith in the simple Word of God. For much of the firmness with which they refused to listen to any of the artifices of the adversary, they are said to have been indebted to the good sense and piety of Pontanus. Even Melancthon, it seems, found the advantage of such a counsellor. The three great points of dispute were, the lawfulness of administering the communion in both kinds, the marriage of the clergy, and the nature of the mass. Me-

\* Seckendorf, lib. II., sec. 67, ad. I.

lancthon sometimes wavered as to the degree of liberty which might be allowed in the drawing up of a creed on these subjects. He associated with men of the opposite party, whose mild tempers and desire of peace tended greatly to confirm his own inclination to soften and pacify where he could not convince. But, at the present moment, Luther, Pontanus, and the bolder spirits of the party, saw clearly that a compromise would procure them no advantage, and that none could be entered into which would not expose them to demands inconsistent with any further pretensions to religious liberty.

This was so clearly understood by the princes, that the suggestions of Melancthon, beloved and honoured as he was, did not affect their decisions when called upon to oppose the late attempts of the papal and imperial partisans. In their reply on the 13th of August, they again remonstrated against the spirit which prevailed in the assemblies of those who undertook to act as arbiters; and repeated, therefore, that it was the duty of the Emperor to summon a council which might not lie open to these suspicions of unfairness.\* Their bold and candid refutation of the faults charged against Protestantism breathes the pure air of a regenerated faith. "We are men and sinners," say they, "but we reverence the Word of God, and the holiness of Christian virtue; nor will we do aught which our consciences forbid, or which might lead to the dishonouring of our profession. In thus determining, we take a better course than do they who persecute us, eject our preachers, and refuse to obey the truth. Let it not be said that the reformed pastors publish doctrines foreign to the Word of God. Our enemies even have adopted some of their notions, and improved their style, by imitating the very men whom they vilify. Nor ought it to be laid to our charge that sects have risen since the commencement of the Reformation: sects existed in the days of the Apostles themselves, and without any fault of theirs. So that we can be no more reasonably accused of the disorders which may have occurred than was Elias by Ahab."

\* Seckendorf, lib. II., sec. 67, ad. II., p. 177.



After making allusion to the confession of the Pontiff Hadrian, that the Roman court itself was the fountain of the evils which deluged the Church, they declare their resolution never to let any unworthy pastor share in their proceedings, but to render, on their own parts, such obedience to the bishops as might be demanded of them, or was authorized by the gospel of Christ. Again alluding to the necessity of a council which should be free and open to the whole body of Christians, they suggest that, for the present, many evils and disorders might be removed by the fair discussion of the points at issue in an assembly of candid-minded men of both parties.

The temperate but forcible language thus employed had its influence on the mind of Charles; and seeing the propriety of still prolonging the opportunity of a compromise, he yielded to the suggestions contained in the above address. A small number of deputies were, therefore, chosen from either side, and a gleam of hope once more inspired the heart of Melancthon, and the few others who would have sacrificed any thing but their consciences and the gospel to the desire of peace. The Protestants chosen for this conference were Melancthon, Schnepfius, and Johannes Brentius; the firm and excellent Pontanus, who is described as the common organ of the party; the Elector of Saxony; the prince, his son; and George, Marquis of Brandenburg. Among the Catholics were the theologians Eckius, Cochläus, and Conrad Wimpina, the Bishop of Augsburg, Henry of Brunswick, Duke George of Saxony, and Jerome Vehi.

Melancthon contemplated the prospect of peace with mingled joy and anxiety. His gentle spirit, his moderation, and willingness to listen to any representations which might soften the asperity of controversy, encouraged the opposite party to hope much from his presence. The view given of his character by enemies of the Reformation affords a striking proof of the incontrovertible claim which he possessed to universal affection; but no solid reason exists for supposing that he ever entertained the thought of yielding any point of belief or practice



essential to the consistency of his party. It was, however, stated, that he refrained from persisting on many things which, in the apprehension of Luther, were necessary to the purification of the Church. Of the twenty-one articles propounded in the Confession, fifteen, according to the report of the papal party, were regarded by Melancthon as capable of modification, and of such a modification, that they might be taken out of the field of disputation, and left to time, rather than to controversy, for final settlement.\*

The six exceptionable articles respected the worship of saints; the communion in both kinds; the marriage of priests; monastic vows; the sacrifice of the mass; and those merely human constitutions on which the Popes and the whole hierarchy of Rome had fixed their claims to absolute authority. Eckius, it appears, fairly acknowledged, when questioned by the catholic princes, that the other heads of the Confession ought not to be branded as heretical: but in the conference, which lasted several days, Melancthon saw reason to suspect the candour of his opponents; and it was only from the hope that, by suppressing a disputatious feeling, great good might be gained, that he persevered in the mild and temperate course at first adopted. The doctrine of original sin formed a conspicuous point in the controversy, as carried on by Luther; but on this Melancthon seemed inclined to preserve a profound silence. Eckius and his associates ought not to be blamed for taking advantage of such a circumstance, when their whole effort was to lessen the apparent importance of the dispute in the eyes of the Emperor and the people. The burden of distinctly stating the doctrine lay properly with the reformers; and the only reason which can be alleged for their effort to pass over the matter in the present conference, was their wish to settle points of more immediate and practical necessity.

On the doctrine of justification by faith alone, the dispute was prosecuted with more freedom on both sides, but not altogether without some dangerous temptations

\* Camerarius, *Vita Melanchthonis*, p. 132; Hagæ, 1655. Sleidan. *Seckendorf. Fleury*, Art. v., sec. 26.

to the reformers. Eckius, it is said, did not positively object to the doctrine, or the language in which it was expressed. He insisted on the necessity of expunging the word "alone," because it might lead to error on the part of the ignorant. To Melancthon's argument, that faith is really the sole medium of justification, he offered no reply; and it was proposed that the language of the doctrine should be, that we are justified by faith and by grace. Melancthon did not object to this, but remarks that Eckius was so ignorant and foolish that he understood not the proper meaning of the word grace.

The issue of the conference had so far satisfied the Protestants on points of doctrine, that they were well disposed to admit the claims of their opponents respecting many things shortly after to be brought into far more earnest dispute. On the jurisdiction of the bishops they said, "We have been willing, as far as in us lies, to support and establish the authority of the prelates; but we reprobate their negligence in preaching the Word of God, and administering the Sacraments; in conferring the priesthood on the most unworthy candidates, and grossly abusing their power of excommunication. These things are in the highest degree reprehensible, and claim the serious attention of those who would improve the state of the Church: but we do not wish to diminish the authority of the bishops, or withdraw our pastors from their government. We desire that they may punish such as offend against piety; that they may maintain and exercise proper spiritual discipline; and do, in short, all things which belong to the highest offices of the church."

Many difficulties were to be apprehended in settling the dispute which had arisen respecting the monastic orders. The fate of hundreds of helpless beings was involved in this part of the controversy; and it would have been well for the cause both of humanity and religion had the matter been settled at a later period of the Reformation, in the same manner as it was in the present conference. Perfect liberty was allowed to those who might prefer the monastic life, to continue in their old and consecrated homes. To those who consci-

entiously wished to re-enter the world, and resume the offices of a useful and active life, the same degree of freedom was accorded; and neither the one party nor the other, therefore, had any longer reason to fear that the late occurrences would lead to personal injury.

But, prosperously as the conference seemed to be proceeding, some members of the assembly suddenly suggested that a sure and sound decision might be more easily secured by diminishing the number of those engaged in the investigation. It was proposed that three only on each side should be retained, Melancthon and Eckius taking upon themselves the whole burden of conducting the dispute. The difficulty of settling any matter of importance, where many are occupied in the discussion, is generally known. It ought not, therefore, to be concluded that this proposition was made with any unfair intention. Three sensible, learned, and consistent Protestants would be as little likely as seven to yield to, or be deceived by, dishonest argument; and as it was just as important to them as to their opponents to bring the debate to a conclusion, the employment of any means for expediting the matter did not, in itself, convey the notion of unfairness. The most questionable circumstance\* in the business is, that Melancthon was to be specially retained,—a point which would almost lead to the conclusion that Eckius suspected, and imagined that he had reason to suspect, the firmness of the author of the Confession. That Melancthon was the most willing to reason with mildness; to allow every suggestion of the adversary to exercise its full influence upon his thoughtful and honest mind, may sufficiently

\* The biographer of Melancthon remarks on this point: “*Insidiose hoc institutum ab adversariis suspicabantur multi, quibus cupiditas pacis in Philippo, et animus placidus à contentionibusque alienus non esset ignotus. Itaque callidè ii solum Philippum retineri studuisse existimabantur, quò facilius retinerentur ea quæ nolebant amittere. Sanè tum Philippus Melancthon in tam magno periculosoque negotio solus relictus, de omnibus non modo cogitare accuratus, sed quærere etiam disputareque liberior, necnon argumenta afferre cur hoc aut illud adversariis flagitantibus concedi deberet, quò magis disserendo veritas et eluceret et confirmaretur. Hoc est, interpretatione malevolorum, in eam partem detortum, ut de Philippo Melancthone cum opinio conciperetur, tum spargeretur fama ea, quam paulo ante indicavimus innocentissimo illo prorsus id quod exitus declaravit.*”—Camerarius, *Vita Melancthi.* p. 133.



account for the circumstance that he was less dreaded than those who supported him in the debate. To whatever motive we ascribe the conduct of the Romanists in wishing to diminish the number of the disputants, the retaining of Melancthon, or his being so willingly allowed to remain at his post, indicates the one of these two things, either that he was supposed to be open to persuasion, or that he really pressed for the higher doctrines of Protestantism with less earnestness than Luther and his associates.

So little favour, however, did the above alteration find in the eyes of either party, that it led to the speedy breaking up of the conference. Melancthon, it was feared, might yield too much, and he received, therefore, an intimation from his party that nothing more must be allowed, either to the threats or the entreaties of the Catholics.\* The latter, finding that they had but little to expect from the gentleness and moderation of the protestant theologian, saw it necessary again to remodel the meeting, and proposed that a still larger number of persons than that originally named should be admitted to the conference.

Both the Elector of Saxony and the other princes felt alarmed at this new change. It was now believed that to multiply the disputants would render the prospect of an arrangement more distant than ever. Urging their objections, therefore, with that steadiness of purpose for which they were characterized in all their movements, they not only insisted on the necessity of acting according to the plan already proposed, but repeated, with increasing courage and firmness, their former appeals to a general council. Assured, moreover, of the justice of their proceedings as well as of their cause, they directed that a paper might be drawn up, giving an account of their conduct in the late conference, and containing strong remonstrances against what they

\* The editor of Sleidan takes notice of this circumstance, and says that Melancthon's hands were bound, lest his good sense and moderation should carry him too far in the work of reconciliation. T. i., liv. VII., p. 290. "Melancthon," says Fleury, "was more accommodating than any one else." Again: "Melancthon became suspected by most of his own party, because he appeared too complying."—Art. v. sec. 26.



regarded as the unfair machinations of the adversary to prevent the success of the plans attempted for the restoration of peace.

The delay occasioned by these proceedings gave to the spectators on each side ample opportunity of considering the relative degrees of strength displayed, and the reasons which might be entertained for expecting the final success of the one or the other party. Luther contemplated the scene, from his retreat in the castle of Coburg, with intense and painful anxiety. He admired the graces of Melancthon, but he feared those very graces might be employed by the Romanists to the injury of truth. The real question at issue seemed often on the point of being forgotten by the divines at Augsburg: it was not whether so much or so little freedom should be granted to the reformers as a new sect, but whether the majesty and supreme authority of Scripture should continue to be subject to the authority of Rome. Had the former been the matter in debate, much might have been yielded to circumstances, to expediency, to the hope of better seasons for advancing or retreating: but, in the latter case, Luther wisely resolved, that to contend for any thing less than the entire principle of Christian liberty, and the full display of divine truth, would be an offence against Heaven, and the ruin of the designs which God was working by his hands.\*

Luther's anxiety increased when he found that the communications of his associates became less frequent as they were further involved in the business of the meeting.† Melancthon excused himself, and accounted for the delay, by alleging the backwardness of the opposite party to proceed with the discussion of the questions

\* Luther's *Leben*, p. 638. "Melancthon," says Pfizer, "was the spokesman of the Protestants; but, however eloquent in his zeal for evangelical truth, he had not the knowledge or the experience of Luther:" neither had he his ardent spirit, nor his deep penetration into the iniquity of the Roman superstitions: he took, in short, his starting point rather from a theoretical than an actual view of things.

† Maimburg says, on the contrary, that Luther received daily communications. "*Interea Lutherus, cui quotidie missis cursoribus significabantur, quæ in comitiis et colloquiis agebantur, continuu ad ducem Saxonie, et ad doctores partium suarum, literis monebat, querebaturque, quod nimium cederent, et quod decipi se sincerent.*" Sect. 32.

at issue. This apology was supported by the additional fact, that the means of forwarding intelligence were rare and ill supplied, and that even the Elector's establishment did not furnish such assistance as might be desired. These reasons were far from satisfying Luther, and he passed them over in his letter to Melancthon with a kind but distrustful expression. "We will consider your apology, dear Philip," says he, "another time: but the cares by which you are oppressed I hate from my very soul. That they take the upper hand in your heart is not the consequence of great toil, but of great unbelief. In the time of John Huss, there were much weightier reasons for fear than in ours; and if they were as great now as then, He also is great through whom the work has been begun and is carried forward, for we are not the authors of the design. Why are you then so weak and timid? Are we employed about an unrighteous thing? If so, let us cease to pursue it. I am troubled sometimes, but not always. It is your philosophy, not your theology, which plagues you. What can the devil do more than kill us? I pray you, for God's sake, be watchful: strive against yourself, for you give the devil vantage ground whence he may destroy you. I pray diligently for you, and am full of grief that care should suck your blood like a leech, and make my prayer for you powerless. However things concern me, whether it be the result of my folly, or of the working of the Spirit, my Lord Christ knows; yet am I not so troubled. What! I have a better hope than I thought; and should I hear that things go badly with you, it will be hard for me to restrain myself. I must hasten to you, and see how terribly the devil shows his teeth."\*

In the same style of mingled reproof, exhortation and hope, did this great man write to his beloved friend and associate on the 29th of June. "The fair speeches with which you excuse your silence have been duly considered. I have in the mean while written you two letters, in which my own silence is sufficiently accounted for. Your last arrived to-day; and you give me such

\* Sämmtliche Schriften, t. xvi., p. 1062.

a melancholy description of your labours, dangers and sorrows, that I should very unwillingly add to them by my silence. But do you really suppose that I am ignorant of your anxieties; or that I sit here in a garden of roses, and have no share of the burden? Would to God that things were so with me that I could weep! I had firmly resolved, had your letter not come this evening, to send a messenger, at my own expense, to learn whether you were alive or dead. I have looked at your Apology; and am full of wonder at what you can mean by wishing to know, what, and how much, one ought to yield to the Papacy. I go over the subject day and night: I think, consider, dispute, and search through the Scriptures; and more and more do I become convinced of the certain foundation of our doctrines. This makes me grow bolder every day; and I am resolved, let the event be what it will, to give up nothing further." After alluding to his state of health, he says, "Far rather would I endure any pain of body than torment of spirit; and I hope that God, who has overcome in me the father of lies, will also overcome the murderer. He has sworn to destroy me: that I feel full well: he has no rest: he has devoured me. Well, let him devour me; he shall find me a dose which will gripe his belly." Again: "I am little pleased at your saying in your letter that you have acted as you have done in fulfilment of my command: I will command, I will order, nothing. Neither will I be called author. And if any troublesome doubts should hence arise, no word will I speak. If things go not so well with you as with me, it shall not be said that you are under my control, but I will carry the affair on by myself, and it shall be mine alone."

In the same resolute tone he speaks in another passage of his letter: "The end and issue of the business troubles you, because you do not fully understand it. God has set it in a place which you can find in neither your rhetoric nor your philosophy:\* this place

\* Luther and Melancthon were strongly opposed in matters of philosophical speculation. The former regarded the philosophy of Aristotle as the shield of most of the errors which prevailed in his time; while the latter long cultivated the system of the great master of dialectics, and laid the



is faith, where all things stand which we can neither see nor comprehend. He who would make such things visible, probable, and comprehensible, as you would, will have, like you, sorrow of heart and crying for his reward." And again, in a letter dated June 30 : " I scarcely know, in fact, what to write to you, so rarely can I bear to think of your unholy and useless cares ; and I feel that my counsel would avail nothing with you !" In one written a little later, he says : " In private matters I am somewhat weak, and you are bolder. On the contrary, you are in public matters as I am in private ; and I am as confident in the former as you are in the latter. By private affairs I mean those which concern the struggle between me and Satan. You say you would not mind risking your life, but that you are anxious for the common cause. So far, however, as things in general are concerned, I am altogether tranquil and contented, for I know that the cause is right and good, and that it is the cause of Christ and of God.\*"

The attempt of the amiable but timid Melancthon to unite the two parties was thus discouraged, in a letter dated July 13 : " I think you will now see by experience that it is impossible to unite Christ and Belial in any way whatever ; and that if religion be considered, we ought not to think of any union. The affair, however, may have

foundation of his fame by his success in this branch of study. Like Luther, however, he acknowledged that the use made of Aristotle was injurious to religion, and in his Common Place Book calls him a mangler, leaving out all mention of his moral writings. In the Apology for the Confession he treats him with more courtesy. Apolog. August. Confess. p. 82 ; et de Vita Aristotelis.

\* Melancthon's conduct has been defended by his admirers as offering a striking contrast to the imprudent zeal of other reformers. " Non etiam verebatur cum adversariis colloqui. Quæ, cum fierent ab eo optimo animo, neque nocerent causæ ac potius valde prodesse, non tamen effugerunt criminationes etiam amicorum, parum recte de his existimantium, vel ardore quodam cupiditatum suarum, vel minus perspectæ rei indiligente consideratione." Camerarius, p. 124. But it should be remembered that Luther was equally ready to exercise caution. This was shown in his conduct towards those who desired to effect a reformation as to outward things, and by violent means. He rightly considered, it has been observed, that he would do more good by the translation of the New Testament into German than by breaking all the images in the world. Spittlers. Geschichte des Papstthums, p. 235.



already gone further, and while my letters to you remain unanswered. But so far as I am concerned, I will not retreat a hair's-breadth, or promote any alteration; and should it cost me my life, I will thus obstinately pursue the course I have begun. The Emperor may do what he can. I would willingly know what you have done. I have prayed the Lord, who stands by you a thousand times more than I do. Yet since the lying devil's head sports with the promise of a free council, so would I also sport with them, and would appeal from their threats to such a council, which in fact will never take place, that I might, for a little while, enjoy peace. I trouble not myself in the least about power or the powerful. But you think otherwise, and take not my counsel, and therefore have no rest. And as for future unhappiness, which is as nothing, lay the present cross upon your neck; that is also nothing."\*

While Luther was thus exhorting his associates to a more resolute course of proceeding, he spent his own days and nights in solemn meditation on the sublime truths, the free publication of which was the object of his life. The translation of the Prophets, begun some time since, furnished his ever active and inquiring soul with themes nobly adapted to his present state of feeling. A version of the Psalms was simultaneously undertaken, and those who are familiar with these labours of Luther, in the maturity and plenitude of his powers, may draw from them many an illustration of what has now been recorded.

The deep seclusion of Luther, his elevated devotion, his untiring activity of thought, his sublime confidence in the foreseeing goodness of the great Head of the Church, all combine to render this one of the most interesting periods of his life. His influence on the progress of affairs was scarcely lessened, in any degree, by his absence from the spot where the visible conflict was carried on. The rule of conduct had been too definitely marked out to permit even the most timid to deviate far from the right line. But not content with the general

\* *Sämmtliche Schriften*, t. xvi. p. 1102.

instructions given at the moment of separation, he watched the proceedings of his friends, at a distance, with an anxiety full of apostolic zeal and fatherly tenderness. His letters to Melancthon express sentiments which would have borne a different colour and character, had they not been uttered with the feelings of a friend, as well as those of a watchful minister of the Church. In many of the finest passages of his writings it is the personal interest which he took in the gospel, the anxiety which he felt for the sanctification of his own heart, and that of those with whom he was united, that gives grace and beauty to his sentiments. Melancthon's soul was dear to him; and we may believe, perhaps, without much error, that when he warned him against yielding to Eckius, he feared not less for his own peace and salvation than for the safety of Protestantism and the gospel.

Luther soon became weary of retirement, and he employed many of the hours which infirmity refused to study, in translating or remodelling *Æsop's Fables*.\* When this resource failed, he would unbend by writing jocose letters to his friends. But no effort could preserve him from long attacks of violent head-ache, or from those far more distressing fits of melancholy to which he was constitutionally subject. These were, no doubt, increased by his solitude and the continually ardent efforts of his mind to realize its sublimest conceptions. An intense and glowing feeling that the interest of divine truth was the only object for which he lived—that love for its principles was the only foundation of his labours, and that, in seeking to free it from the trammels of superstition, he was approving himself faithful to God, and the best benefactor of his

\* "It was usually after dinner," says Matthesius, "that he betook himself to this employment, and as he proceeded in his work he became more and more convinced of the profound wisdom to be found in the old fables, and of the use which might be made of them in the teaching of the highest moral truths. An old German edition of *Æsop* formed his text-book, and he proceeded through sixteen of the best of the fables, his familiarity with the whole, it is said, being often evinced by the allusions and illustrations which he employed in ordinary conversation. It may be worth while naming that Luther was altogether a sceptic as to the existence of such a person as *Æsop*, or as to the fables known under his name being really the composition of one author."—*Leben*, p. 672-3.

race; this often raised him to that point of spiritual and mental elevation which it is not in our nature long to sustain, but any sudden fall from which, whether through physical or moral infirmity, precipitates the soul into a vortex of sad and indefinable apprehensions. The very language in which he expressed himself at this period exhibits an unusual warmth; and illustrations are afforded in his letters of a poetry of thought and expression not to be seen in his ordinary style. His letter to Chancellor Brück,\* dated August 15, furnishes us with an instance of this kind. "I have lately seen two wonders," says he; "the first was when I looked out of my window and beheld the stars of heaven, and the whole outspread vault of God, and saw no pillars whereon the Master had set this mighty vault; yet the heavens fell not, and the blue vault still stands fast. Now they are foolish who would seek such supports, and would lay hold of and feel them. Because they cannot see these pillars, they shake and tremble, and think the heavens must fall, only because they are not able to feel its supports. If they could do this, they would suppose themselves secure. The other wonder was, I saw thick and heavy clouds sweeping over us with such weight that they might be compared to a vast sea; neither was any ground to be seen whereon they might rest, nor any hollow wherein they could be collected; yet fell they not on us, but greeted us with a savage look, and passed away. As soon as they had vanished, smiled forth the rainbow, our roof, and the ground, as it were, which had held them. It was a little narrow path and roof swept about in the clouds, and rather like a figure seen through painted glass than a strong support, so that we might as well have doubted respecting its strength as we had before feared the great water-load. Yet there are some who think more of the water and of the thick clouds and their heavy burden, and who fear them more, comparing them with this small and light shadow. They would willingly try the strength of that appearance; because they know not what it is, they fear the clouds will produce another

\* Or Pontanus, the name latinized. Epist., July 20.



deluge. Our rainbow is weak ; your clouds are strong ; but we shall see in the end who has the victory.”

The confidence which he felt respecting public affairs, as contrasted with his own personal and inward struggles, is finely shown in the account given by Sagittarius of his long and intense devotions. “I cannot,” says he, “sufficiently admire the singular constancy, cheerfulness, faith and hope of Luther in these most fearful days. But he nourishes them continually by the study of the Word of God. No day passes without his giving at least three hours to devotion. It once happened that I heard him praying. Good God ! what spirit, what faith, was in his words ! His reverential awe proved that he was speaking to God ; his hope and faith that he felt he was addressing a father and a friend. ‘I know,’ he said, ‘that thou art our Father and our God, and am certain that thou wilt destroy the persecutors of thy children ; for it is thy danger as well as ours ; it is all thy business ; we have undertaken it because led thereto.’” \*

It was while Luther had his abode in the castle of Coburg that he lost his venerable father. The news of his sickness had been communicated a short time before in a letter from his brother Jacob, and he immediately addressed his beloved parent in a strain of affectionate caution. “God,” says he, “has hitherto granted you a strong and hardy frame, but your sickness at such a time of life occasions me many anxious thoughts. I would, therefore, willingly come to you myself, but my good friends insist that I ought not to run into danger, and thereby tempt God’s providence ; to which opinion I am obliged to consent ; for you know how favourably the lords and the peasantry think of me. I might, indeed, come to you, but it would be dangerous to attempt getting back. Great joy should

\* It was about this time that he made a selection of several passages of Scripture, which he arranged in twenty paragraphs, as eminently calculated to afford consolation in times of great trouble and sorrow. ‘Our fathers,’ says he, in the preface to this little work, ‘had not the pure and rightly-understood word of God as we now, through his grace and bounty, so largely enjoy it, living in a most happy period, in which the divine word has been restored to light, a benefit bestowed upon us by the mere favour of God.’—*Sämmtliche Schriften*, Ar. 1830.



I have, were it possible for you and my mother to come to us, which my Kate and we all desire, even with tears."

The news of the old man's death was sent to Luther by his wife, who, with a delicacy of thought and affection happily illustrative of her character, forwarded in the letter a likeness of one of their children. An acknowledgment of this letter was returned by his favourite servant, who says, "Do not be distressed, dear lady, on account of the doctor; he is, God be praised, fresh and well, and is comforted, though the tidings of his father's death did at first sorely afflict him. As soon as he received the letter, he said to me, 'Well, my father is dead!' and then immediately took up his Psalter, went into his chamber, and wept long, neglecting the next day to have his head dressed. We saw nothing further of outward signs of grief."

It was thus that Luther could rise superior to every feeling but that which actually exalted him so far above other men, the conviction, that is, of the necessity of hazarding every thing for the good of the Church of Christ. While unmoved by fears, he resisted with equal firmness the attempts now made to lessen his power by milder efforts. "They urge us to restore things to their former state," says he, in a letter to Justus Jonas; "let us urge them to restore Leonardus Keyser\* and the other martyrs whose blood they have shed; let them restore the souls brought to perdition by their impious doctrines; let them restore the means of good exhausted by fallacious indulgences and other frauds; let them restore the glory of God, violated by so many blasphemies; let them restore purity to the Church, to its ordinances, and its ministers, now so defiled by corruption, and then we will speak to them of restoring things to their former state." †

Besides the works above alluded to, Luther wrote some tracts during his sojourn at Coburg, which produced considerable effect on the minds of his party. ‡

\* Leonardus Keyser was burnt on the 16th of August 1527, by order of the Duke of Bavaria. Eckius was among his judges, and the Bishop of Passau condemned him as a heretic, but delivered him up to the magistrate for execution.—Sleidan, t. i., liv. VI., p. 244.

† July 13. *Sämmtliche Schriften*, t. xvi. p. 1101.

‡ Maimburg speaks of these in a very angry tone: "Scripsit etiam multos tractatus, lingua populari, adversus imperatorem et episcopos, ut populo et nobilitati eos invisos faceret. Alios edidit, in quibus veritatem catholicam,

Among these was “An Admonition to the Clergy assembled at Augsburg.” Copies of this work were distributed by order of the Elector at the commencement of the discussions, and it was read with an attention which might well alarm the opposite party. The good sense of Luther, and his power of argumentation, founded on that quality and a knowledge of Scripture, are strikingly exemplified in its pages. “Nothing,” says he, “has been able to hinder the progress of our cause. That we know in what to believe, how we ought to live, to teach, to act, how to be strong, and how to die; when we are to expect and to find all things, and when we are to wait in patience; that we should know these things, neither the Turks nor the devil can prevent.” Again: “You caution us against the introduction of novelties. Let us consider this matter. Tell me, dear sirs, you who vociferate that no new thing ought to be introduced; are those masses, which are celebrated for the sake of gain, wanting in the character of novelty? Or, if no novelties ought to have been admitted, tell me, I beseech you, how much would be left you of those rites which are extant in the canons and the fathers? Why, no more than would fill a little nut-shell, while your inventions and novelties would fill the world.” The conclusion of this address expresses that lofty assurance in the protection and blessing of God, which lay at the root of all his proceedings. “You know,” says he, “or at least ought to know, that the government of the Church, instituted by God, should be assisted and strengthened, nor ever exposed to the danger of being converted into a tyranny or servitude. If this be properly attended to, we may be able to assist you in recovering the pristine authority of the Church among the people; for if you wish to effect any thing durable, the prayers of the Lutherans may at least, I should think, contribute to forward your endeavours. But if, which God forbid, you attempt to effect your object by force, and act obstinately and pertinaciously, I, together with all who think *et consuetudines Ecclesiæ Romanæ oppugnabat, ac ludibrio exponebat. Vulgabatur scandalosa hæc scripta Augustæ in comitiis, et aliis in urbibus, idque aperte ad seditionem, et rumpendam, quæ coire incipiebat, inter Catholicos et Protestantés pacem pertinebat.*”

as I do, call God and the world to witness that we have no share in your overthrow, which will be wholly owing to your own pride and haughtiness. Your blood be on you, and on your heads. We are free from fault, and desire to be so; nor have we left unsaid any thing whereby we might warn you of danger, or neglected any conditions which might lead to peace. We have sought nothing but the pure gospel, the only consolation of our souls; so that we are fully assured in our consciences that it is not through us that concord is not established. May the God of peace, the author of all comfort, direct you, by his Holy Spirit, into all truth, by Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, for his innumerable gifts and benefits, be praise and glory for ever." \*

Luther manifested no slight degree of boldness in venturing to put forth such an address at such a period. That his friends were not wrong in setting a high value on his courage in this instance, is shown by the manner in which his enemies describe it. To them his language was that of a rebel and a heretic; and even the Emperor did not escape sharp reprehension for laxity of duty in allowing him to remain free, or not obliging the Elector of Saxony to drive him from his retreat to a dungeon, or the scaffold. But he was protected by that power which, if it preserves kings and princes for the wise and benevolent purposes of social life, will never refuse like protection to those who are engaged in the service of Christ and the gospel.

\* Luther's Sämmtliche Schriften, T. Pfizer's Luther's Leben.

## CHAP. II.

DIET OF AUGSBURG—FURTHER PROCEEDINGS—THE DECREE  
—CONDUCT OF THE PROTESTANTS AND THEIR APOLOGY—  
MEETING AT SMALCALDE—THE LEAGUE.

THE efforts of Melancthon to subdue the hostility of his opponents by mild and cautious conduct were as unsuccessful as Luther had predicted. This want of success in such a mode of proceeding may be partly accounted for by the state of the controversy. It was impossible that the young and earnest spirit of Protestantism should rest, while the very object for which it existed was full in view, but still distant. The right of free inquiry had been asserted as necessary to the cause of truth and holiness. To reform and improve, to change or establish, according to the declared will of God, was the immediate practical result of the vast discoveries which had just been made. Perseverance in this course did not now depend merely on the originators of the Reformation. Vast bodies of men had discovered the truth and necessity of its principles. The Bible was become to thousands more precious than all the associations of memory; than all the promises of the Church; than all the splendour of its pomps, or the visionary holiness of its traditions and its sainted calendar. They had found antiquity in the Bible; and the Roman Church, with all its claims to exclusive reverence, shrunk, in its purest days, into a province only of the Church of Christ. In the Bible they had found promises given by the Spirit of truth himself; revelations of overpowering grandeur and sublimity; and appeals to the affections, which might well engage the warmest sympathies of the warmest hearts. This was, in fact, the grand secret of Luther's success. By bringing men to the oracles of life, he taught them where to find the inestimably precious substance of that, the shadow only of which had for so long a period been their



nourishment. To a casual observer it seems inexplicable how the people could be led, from the splendid though false attractions of the Romish worship, to delight in the simple privileges offered by evangelical teaching. But the mystery vanishes when it is considered that the human heart very easily distinguishes between the sign and the reality, between the type and the antitype, when they are presented together; and that the Reformation did enable the people to make this comparison. Wherever the Bible is opened, its mysteries unfolded and explained, men, on whom any portion of light has been bestowed, discover that it leads them by the nearest path to the rest or the glory which they seek. It does not invite them to leave a sunny region of imagination, or the impressive solemnities of the vaulted sanctuary, to grow cold in the cheerless regions of precept or paradox, but it places them in the midst of a true spiritual and mental paradise, and, exalting their thoughts to the vision of God and eternity, renders them gladly willing to leave behind the miserable inventions of a carnal system.

It was not to be supposed, that those who had faithfully embraced the hopes thus presented them in the gospel would submit to see the foundation of those hopes cut away beneath them. The views which had been opened were of a nature so well calculated to inspire confidence, and to animate the mind with longings for the great and good, that the base only could have retreated after having once enjoyed them. None understood the nature of the case so completely as Luther himself, but all had an instinctive feeling that little short of a miracle could bring the great body of separatists back into the bosom of the Roman Church. Discussion, therefore, was of no other use than to furnish opportunities for fresh and clearer declarations of doctrine. In this respect it did more good to both parties than either probably supposed; but things were then, as now, destined to remain in the same state, till the solemn principle should be universally established, that the Word of God is not only the sole, but the sufficient test of truth.

The questions disputed at Augsburg divided themselves into two classes: Under the first were ranged those which had rather a temporal and political bearing than any religious tendency; under the latter were those of a purely doctrinal nature. In respect to the former, Luther, even, was not indisposed to yield somewhat; and Melancthon would have gladly consented to the entire re-establishment of the power of the bishops, and of all other antient claimants to prescriptive rights, for the sake of peace. It was, he himself asserts, owing to this, that he incurred the suspicion of his party, and not from any inclination to modify the profession of evangelical doctrine.\*

After a long but unavailing attempt to determine the questions at issue, the three disputants who had been chosen on either side manifested an inclination to resign the task they had undertaken to a more numerous and powerful body. It was, therefore, proposed to increase the number; but the Protestants at large regarded this proposal as only calculated to prolong the debate, and involve them in difficulties from which they were more likely to remain free by terminating a partial inquiry, and appealing to a general council.†

The Emperor, convinced, at length, that the measures hitherto pursued could never effect the object designed, summoned, on the 7th of September, the numerous princes and other dignified persons who supported the cause of Rome, into his presence. After a brief consultation, the Elector of Saxony and the rest of the protestant chiefs were called for; and Charles,

\* Maimburg states that Melancthon had actually incurred the hatred of his party; "in suspicionem et odium apud Protestantem venit;" but had this been generally the case, it is not likely that he would have been left to superintend the conclusion of the business at Augsburg. Sec. 33. In a letter, however, to Luther, dated Sept. 1, Melancthon says, "Non credis quanto in odio sim Noricis, et nescio quibus aliis, propter restitutam episcopis jurisdictionem: ita de suo regno, non de evangelio, dimicant socii nostri. Amicus quidam scripsit, me, si quanta voluissem, maxima pecunia a Romano Pontifice conductus essem, non potuisse meliorem rationem suscipere restituendæ dominationis Pontificiæ, quam, hanc esse judicent homines, quam instituimus. Ego nullum adhuc articulum deserui et abjeci, qui ad doctrinam pertineat; tantum stomachabantur de politicis rebus, quas non est nostrum eripere episcopis."—Lib. I. Epist. 20.

† Sleidan, t. i., liv. VII., p. 290.

having first desired all but his brother Ferdinand and four of his principal advisers to retire, directed Frederic Count Palatine to acquaint the reformers with his sentiments on their late proceedings. According to the statement thus given, he had hoped that the plans on which he acted would lead to the re-establishment of peace; but that as the dissensions still continued, and an appeal was made to a general council, he would yield to the urgent requests of the Protestants, and use his authority and influence to secure the meeting of such an assembly. Thus far the reformers had every reason to acknowledge, with gratitude, the liberality and consideration of the head of the empire; but before the Count concluded his address, it was found that the Emperor pledged his promise to promote the calling of a council, on the condition that the reformers should obey and practise the rites of the Roman Church till such time as it should meet,—a condition which, if lawful to obey at all, implied the utter unlawfulness of any of the proceedings in which the complainants had engaged.

A few hours of deep and anxious consultation enabled the Protestants to determine on their answer to the Emperor. They thanked him for his promises respecting the General Council, but strongly asserted their right to independence of opinion, without incurring the charge of sectarianism or schism. In referring again to the council, they desired that, to secure its freedom of decision, it might be assembled in Germany, their return to the Church of Rome, under any conditions, being rejected with the firmness which might have been expected from such men and under such circumstances. The rejoinder to this reply afforded the reformers fresh cause for concern. Charles expressed his surprise that the conciliatory offers of the catholic commissioners had not been received with gratitude, and endeavoured to establish the principle, that in this, as in other cases, the few should yield to the many.\*

On the following day Pontanus replied, in the name of the protestant princes, that they were ready to con-

\* Sleidan, t. i., lib. VII., p. 292.



form themselves to the will of the Emperor in every thing which opposed not the plain decision of the law or their consciences; that, in desiring a free council, they spoke but according to the decrees of many previous Diets, and that, confiding in the promises of the Emperor, they would refrain from every thing, in the interval, which might not be justified in the eyes of God, and the representatives of the universal Church of Christ.\*

The Elector of Saxony, weary and discouraged by these protracted delays, expressed a wish for permission to return home. He made a formal application to this purpose on the 18th of September, when the Emperor assured him that, if he would remain four days longer, the business of the Diet should be brought to a close. Yielding to the importunities of Charles, the Elector consented to wait the appointed period, and on the 22d the two parties were assembled in all their force, to hear the decree which was to be received as the law of the empire. This act, so important to the reformers, purported, that the Elector of Saxony had presented a confession of doctrine which was refuted by the plain testimony of Scripture; that the Protestants had subsequently been induced to acknowledge some of the dogmas of the Church, though they rejected others; that, to prove his clemency, the Emperor had consented to allow them till the 15th of April in the following year for further deliberation, and to determine whether they would submit themselves to the Pope, to their sovereign, and the whole Christian world; that, having granted them this indulgence, he forbade the Elector of Saxony and his associates from publishing any religious novelties in their states, from favouring innovations by their own conduct, or exercising any control or violence against such of their subjects as might adhere to the antient religion. It was further stated, that means must be

\* Pallavicino affirms, in the face of these declarations, that the Protestants did not desire a general council, but in reality trembled at the thoughts of one; and relates that, on its being affirmed by Alexander that a council was to be held, the protestant representatives expressed their fears by a melancholy and general silence.—Hist. Con. Trident., lib. III. c. 5.



immediately adopted for repressing the Anabaptists, and all other sectaries who taught any other doctrine respecting the Lord's Supper than that acknowledged by the Church. As a relief to the suspicious tendency of this last article, a fresh promise was given, that the Emperor would straightway commence preparations for assembling a general council.

To the sentiments and commands thus conveyed, the Elector and other protestant princes replied, with becoming courage, that they did not acknowledge their doctrines had been refuted by an appeal to Scripture;\* that, on the contrary, they believed them to be firmly established on the foundation of divine truth; and that, had they been early furnished with a copy of the Refutation, they would have proved at once their pure and scriptural character. Pontanus, by whom this reply was made, then presented a copy of the Apology for the Confession; and, continuing his address, persisted in asserting the freedom of his party from the leaven of sectarianism, or aught that could properly expose them to the accusations of their enemies. "The Anabaptists," he said, "had never been tolerated by them. Neither they, nor the members of any other sect which despised the sacrament of the altar, were admitted into protestant states; they had, on the contrary, punished them for their errors, and, instead of sharing in their wild and impious proceedings, would continue to do so to the utmost of their power."†

The firmness of the Protestants seemed, at this point, to urge the Emperor into measures which savoured far more of pride and intolerance than the sentiments delivered in the earlier discussions of the Diet. By his order, the Elector of Brandenburg declared next day that his Imperial Majesty viewed with surprise the boldness of the Protestants in asserting the purity and

\* Sleidan, t. i., liv. VII., p. 295.

† Maimburg says that the Protestants were terribly alarmed at the decree: "*Vehementer hoc decreto, minime expectato, territi*," sec. 35. This is not in accordance with what is generally related of the conduct of the party at the present period; nor could they, as Seckendorf remarks, be so very surprised at the character of the decree.—Comm. de Luth., lib. II., sec. 78, p. 200.

holiness of their doctrines, confuted as they were by the clear testimony of Scripture, and an appeal to the councils of successive ages; that he was still more astonished at their terming the religion, which he and so many other princes followed, a false religion, since such an assertion implied that not only he, but his ancestors, and the ancestors of all assembled, including those of the Elector of Saxony himself, ought to be regarded as heretics. The nature of such an argument will be easily perceived; but Charles did not scruple to conclude, that, these things being considered, the religion of the Protestants could not be founded on the word or testimony of God. He then spoke again of the great clemency manifested in the preparation of the decree, and, alluding to the observation which had been made respecting the Refutation of the Apology, excused his refusal of a copy on the plea, that he wished not to favour the continuance of religious controversy; concluding this strange series of inconclusive but haughty assertions by stating, that if the decree were not obeyed, he should take such measures as became his duty and his authority.

To that which he had said in the name of the Emperor, the Elector of Brandenburg boldly but impolitically ventured to add somewhat of his own. He besought the protestant princes to weigh well the measures they were taking; to obey the Emperor, and accept the decree. The most solemn promises, he said, had been given by the friends of the Church that they would assist the Emperor in his pious endeavours, not only with their fortunes, but with their blood; and he, on his part, had declared that he would not quit Germany till the affair was settled to the satisfaction both of himself and of his faithful people. The Protestants, still persevering in their purpose not to acknowledge the decree, reasserted the scriptural character of their doctrine, and their assurance that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. "We will do nothing," said Pontanus, "from pride or obstinacy; we will willingly submit ourselves to the Emperor in every thing but the sacrifice of truth; we will aid him, as our

ancestors have done, with our revenues and our lives, and hear, therefore, with surprise and sorrow, that the other princes of Germany can deem it necessary to cherish sentiments so inimical to peace as well as justice."

This new manifestation of steady adherence to their principles produced, on the part of the Emperor, a more open declaration of hostility. "If," said the Elector of Brandenburg, "you now yield to the injunctions of the decree, you will perform a praiseworthy and acceptable duty; but if you continue to oppose it, the states of the empire will issue another decree, and take immediate measures for the complete extirpation of all the sects which have arisen to disturb the peace of Germany and the Church. You say that no evil has resulted from your opinions, whereas the ministers of your churches have furnished motives for sedition, for that horrible war of the peasants in which perished not less than 100,000 men, and for the general contempt both of the Pope and of all other authorities."

The protestant princes confessed the sorrow with which they were affected at beholding the determined spirit of oppression manifested in these several declarations of the Emperor and his party. They had sought in vain for the justice and impartiality which ought to have distinguished the decisions of the head of the empire. To their repeated entreaties that a copy of the decree might be given them to assist their deliberations, they received as constant refusals. "We can then," said they, "do nothing but commit ourselves to God, our only hope and support."

Having thus nobly and patiently borne the injustice of their enemies, resisting it with those weapons only which christian holiness and wisdom furnished, the Elector of Saxony and other chiefs of the protestant party determined on retiring from the Diet, and hastening to their respective dominions.\* The day after

\* The Elector arrived at Torgau on the 11th of October, and, the following Sunday, heard Luther preach. He had congratulated his return from Augsburg in terms strongly expressive of the state of feeling which then



their departure, Charles summoned to his presence the catholic princes ; and, referring to the conduct of the reformers, again declared his intention to exercise the whole force of his authority in repressing the schism. He then issued an order that the deputies of cities should not leave the Diet till the conclusion of the business in hand, and on the 13th of October again desired their presence. The decree was read to them, and their consent demanded ; but, as a copy of the writing was refused them, as it had been the princes, they excused giving their assent till after further deliberation.

Other meetings took place between the Emperor and the deputies of the cities, and those left by the Elector and other princes to represent them in the Diet. But the arguments, as urged on both sides, appeared to be repeated only for the sake of softening the now too evident approach of a dark and terrible collision. The deputies of the city of Strasburg became the particular objects of the growing resentment of the Emperor. Strasburg, it was recollected, had not only asserted the right of the people to the Scriptures, but had gone to the full length of the Swiss reformers ; and its throwing off the yoke of the Roman Church was attended with circumstances as likely to irritate the feelings of its zealous champions as the act itself. A memorial had been drawn up against the citizens by Eckius and Faber. It abounded in allegations which could only have been justified, had the people been guilty of a public renunciation of the main articles of the christian faith ; but it answered the purpose of the party whence it emanated. The Emperor allowed it to be said, that if they would not return into the old paths, and submit to the

prevailed. "I rejoice from my heart that your highness is returned safe and well from the infernal Augsburg. Although the rage and madness of men are great against us, we are supported by the good hope that the grace of God manifested towards us will increase more and more. For our enemies are not less subject to the power of God than we are ; and I am convinced that without his permission they can effect nothing, nor hurt us or any one else, even in the smallest matter. I have commended the whole affair to my Lord and my God. He who gave us the will, will give us the means of bringing it to perfection." *Cœlest. in Comm. de Luth., lib. II., sec. 73, p. 202.* This forms No. 1316 in the edition of De Wette, t. iv., p. 179.



discipline of the Church which they had forsaken, he would exercise against them the full force of his authority.

An answer was returned to these threats, similar to that given by the princes or their deputies. A copy of the Refutation was again demanded and refused ; and the deputies both of Strasburg and of the other free cities concluded by stating, that they could see no prospect of an adjustment of the dispute, except that presented by the summoning of a free general council. One more effort, however, was made, by the representatives of the Elector of Saxony and the other princes, to soften the harsh feelings of the Emperor. "Grant us peace and protection," said they, "till the quarrel can be settled by the decrees of a council;" to which Charles replied, that, as they had rejected the decree of the Diet, he had formed an alliance, "not offensive but defensive," with the catholic princes, in order that those who professed the same religion as himself might be protected from any sudden violence. With regard to the prayer that, as Protestants, they might be supported against the decisions of certain fiscal authorities, whose partiality was suspected,—to take any measures in their favour, he said, would be unjust, and he must, therefore, leave them to the general operation of the laws as established on long-received and acknowledged principles. This answer to their application induced the deputies to address the assembled orders by a memorial, in which they demanded, that the names of the princes whom they represented should not be inserted in the decree; and that the passages should be obliterated or corrected, in which it was said, that those only who had signed the decree should be allowed a seat in the tribunal of the empire, or in the imperial chamber. "If this be not done," said the deputies, "our princes will withhold their contributions for the support of this chamber; nor will they assist in the war against the Turks."

Thus ended the efforts of either party to conciliate its opponent, and on the 26th of November the decree of the Diet was read in the presence of the Emperor

and the orders of the state. In this celebrated ordinance it was stated, that no toleration should be allowed to those who taught any doctrine respecting the Lord's Supper but that received by the Church; that no change should be suffered in the service of the mass, either public or private; that children should continue to be confirmed with the chrism, and that extreme unction should be administered to the sick; that neither images nor statues should be taken from the churches, and that they should be restored where taken away; that the opinion of those who denied the free will of man should not be suffered; that nothing should be taught which affected the authority of the civil magistrate; that the doctrine which affirmed man's justification by faith alone should not be tolerated; that the number of sacraments should remain the same as formerly; that all the ceremonies of the Church, such as those relating to the dead, and other like ordinances, should be retained; that benefices should be bestowed only on persons properly qualified to receive them; that priests and other ecclesiastics who had married should be deprived of their livings, which should be immediately conferred on others; that the bishops, with consent of the Pope, should have the power of reinstating such of these ecclesiastics, who, forsaking their wives, should demand absolution for their offence; and that those who did not thus seek forgiveness should be banished, and receive the chastisement due to their crimes; that the lives and demeanour of priests ought to be in every respect sober and edifying, affording an example to the people, and free from any occasion of scandal; that if, in some places, the clergy had been forced into injurious proceedings, or if their possessions had any where been sold, those proceedings should be declared null and void; that no person should be admitted to teach or preach without a certificate from the bishop respecting his life and doctrine; that, in preaching, the prescribed formulary should be followed by all, and that no one should be suffered to say, as had lately been the case, that the preaching of the gospel had been hindered; that, on the contrary, the people should

be exhorted to hear the mass, to be exact in their attendance on prayer, to offer their devotions to the holy Virgin and the rest of the saints, to observe the festivals, to fast, to abstain from the meats forbidden, and to comfort the poor; that the monks should be taught that it was unlawful for them to forsake their profession and their order; that nothing should be altered in respect either to doctrines or ceremonies; and that they who introduced changes should be punished with death, or at least with the confiscation of their possessions; that the property which had been taken from ecclesiastics should be restored, the monasteries rebuilt, and the rites which had been abolished again introduced and practised.\*

The remaining articles of the decree referred to the protection of those who, living in the states of protestant princes, might be subjected to oppression; to the often-repeated promises respecting a general council, and to the complaint of the reformers against the proceedings in the fiscal chamber; the language of the decree in these as in other respects breathing throughout a spirit of bitterness and hostility which it was as impolitic as unjust to employ.

It was now manifest to all that a struggle was approaching, such as Europe had never yet witnessed; but neither party seemed to be properly acquainted with the means or methods to be employed in defence of its claims. The Catholics had summoned to their aid the power of the state, the authority of the laws, the manifold influences and complicated engines of the Roman court: to which were added the assistance of the choicest and most cultivated intellects in the service of the Church. The activity of these various auxiliaries, united in one grand series of operations, had hitherto only served to precipitate the party which had separated itself to a greater distance than it would ever, probably, have advanced by any inclination or tendency of its own. A degree of austerity had been evinced in the proceedings of the Diet, which fully proved the intentions of the Emperor and his allies to leave nothing

\* Seckendorf, lib. II., sec. 30, p. 203.



undone which his authority and their mutual efforts might possibly effect. But all had, in reality, yet to be done. They could neither persuade nor threaten the Protestants into retracting one iota of their creed. Force, though spoken of, could not, it was plain, be exercised in the present state of affairs. As little satisfied must the keen-sighted Emperor have been with the presumptuous boastings of the polemics, or with the proposals made by the bolder advocates of the Church to seek the victory in one fierce and determined movement. To every shrewd and experienced observer it must have been manifest, that a long and cautious exercise of policy was still necessary to enable either the civil or the ecclesiastical powers to bring their resources to bear against the Protestants effectually, and, at the same time, safely. Their own defence, even, was a matter which demanded careful consideration. The restoration of those rites and ordinances which had formed the paling round the courts of the Church of Rome would have produced none of those effects looked for by its zealous champions. As well might the admirers of chivalry hope to defend castles and territories by restoring the fortifications which resisted spears and cross-bows; as reasonably might they oppose such defences to the force of artillery, as the champions of Rome might now have opposed the influence of its imaginative forms, or laws founded on tradition, to the newly-discovered, or newly-exercised, force of truth.

But while the catholic party was thus ill prepared for the contest which it had to wage, the Protestants were equally wanting in any proper knowledge of the plans which it behoved them to pursue for the protection of their religion and their liberties. Had Luther's counsels been followed, the whole struggle would, in all probability, have assumed a more spiritual character. The simple assertion of those great evangelical truths which employed his thoughts, required no plans aided by worldly policy; but, left to their inherent energy, the truths themselves would have wrought the change desired. Other principles, however, had been introduced, perhaps necessarily, besides those adopted when Luther



was alone in the work, and contended only as a preacher of righteousness. A vast body of co-operators and followers, the first-fruits of his labours, demanded the adoption of a system which might give form and permanency to their union. The appearance of great political rulers on the stage still further modified the plain, unembarrassed progress of the Reformation, when only aiming at the re-establishment of the gospel.

Whether it would have been possible for Luther and his early associates to preserve their station as simple preachers, or whether, when joined by men of power and influence, they could have sustained the pressure from without, unaided by any political proceedings, may be matter for grave argument; but in the attitude which they had now assumed, and far as they had advanced from the firm shore of hallowed security into the deep ocean of worldly dangers, it became them to consider carefully by what methods their cause might be promoted under circumstances altogether new and strange.

Convinced of the perilous condition in which they stood, the Elector of Saxony hastened, on reaching home, to acquaint his associates with the fears and apprehensions which occupied his mind. A fresh occasion for alarm had arisen in the notice sent him respecting the election of Ferdinand to the dignity of King of the Romans. He was summoned to attend a meeting of the electors at Cologne, in the month of December. The known opinions of Ferdinand rendered his elevation a subject of anxious foreboding to the Protestants; and the most influential of the party resolved to oppose it by every means which the laws afforded or allowed. It was a question, whether legally another ruler could be chosen, while the head of the empire retained his authority, and facilities to exercise it with effect. The most profound knowledge of the theory of the government under which Germany existed, was required for the proper solution of this important dispute. But the time had passed when public men could content themselves with the theoretical examination of principles. A point was now to be carried, which demanded the employ-

ment of every available argument viewed in relation to that point; and neither party could be induced to separate the subject from its own particular modes of thought, feelings, or interests. Whoever will take the pains to consider the character and conduct of Luther, will find that in these respects he rose, in the grandeur of spiritual strength and wisdom, far above his supporters, or any mere pretended enemies of corruption and intolerance. When a vast body of enthusiasts rushed forth, claiming for themselves, on the plea of superior holiness, the right to overthrow the bulwarks of civil society, he exhorted their princes to employ the readiest methods for suppressing such dangerous attempts; and now, when the exalted personages who had embraced his opinions were prepared to oppose the Emperor and the election of his brother, Luther entreated them to desist from their opposition, and to concede largely in a measure which so nearly concerned the feelings and happiness of the head of the state.

Had the enlarged and elevated views of the author of the Reformation been followed, many of the melancholy consequences attendant on the original separation might have been avoided. The unfortunate effects of the union of the political with the religious objects, now contemplated by the advocates of the Reformation, were scarcely ever more visible than in the contest respecting the election of Ferdinand. That prince exercised a lasting and powerful influence on the mind of his brother. He had, moreover, obtained, by his intercourse with the Germanic states, a complete knowledge of their political condition and relations. He was confessedly the head of the catholic party. While Charles himself saw it necessary to conceal or modify the expression of his opinions, and act with caution, lest he might involve his dignity in a charge of favouritism, his brother was at comparative liberty to pursue openly the path pointed out by his own strong opinions, and to uphold, by every means in his power, the party by which they were adopted and promulged. He had exercised this liberty to the utmost, and his conduct rendered him obnoxious to every division of the reforming party: they feared his enmity, and they opposed

him politically. This new species of opposition gave another feature to the character of Protestantism, and rendered it more than ever an object of suspicion and dislike to the imperialists. The contest was carried on with mingled fear, suspicion and resentment, till at length the advocates of the Reformation were taught that they had only, by their vain resistance to the determined policy of Charles, involved themselves in new and greater difficulties.

The apprehensions excited by the present state of affairs urged the Elector of Saxony to take measures for the better organization of the party of which he was the recognised chief. A meeting, accordingly, was held at Smalcalde, on the 22d of December.\* The first subject introduced to the consideration of the assembly was the proposed election of Ferdinand. This, it was generally agreed, involved both the liberty of the empire and the preservation of religion. After further debate, the heads of the protestant confederation agreed that the Emperor should be again petitioned to afford them protection against the attacks of the fiscal chamber. The exactions of this pretended seat of justice were boldly opposed to the equity and impartiality which ought to have been seen in such an institution. When men's minds were roused to examine every point which concerned either their faith or their civil rights with unwonted earnestness, no experiment could have been more dangerous than that hazarded by the courts of justice in the present state of affairs. The blinding spirit of intolerance had led the Emperor and his party into the folly of allowing the Protestants to be condemned when no law existed against them, and when no crime could be laid to their charge. A sense of injury so deep as that inspired by this cause was the species of impulse most likely to urge a large and miscellaneous meeting into acts of strong resistance. But, in the present case, no other measure was adopted than that of a simple appeal to justice. There still existed a hopeful trust in the honour and placability of Charles; and the meeting, having resolved on acting in conformity

\* Sleidan, t. i., liv. VII., p. 308.



with this feeling, proceeded to consider the best methods for securing a harmony of worship and principle among themselves. It was, therefore, determined that the most learned theologians of the party should be appointed to draw up a series of rules for the conduct of their churches, and which might serve to protect them from the evils which already began to be apparent. At the conclusion of this first meeting of the league of Smalcalde, three steps were taken which carried the whole body of the reformers far into the field of contest. By the first, the opposition to the Emperor's brother was confirmed: by the second, measures were proposed which, aiming at the firmer establishment of the new Church, tended to render the separation wider and more permanent: and, by the third, a league was formed, and began to exercise its functions, which essentially divided the forces of the Germanic empire into two bodies, as distinct politically and practically as, by the former separation, they were distinct in opinion and doctrine.

Notwithstanding the powerful opposition made at Cologne to the election of Ferdinand, he was formally installed in the office of King of the Romans  
A. D. 1531. on the 5th of January 1531. The protestant leaders held another meeting at Smalcalde the March following, and signed a treaty of union for six years. It was stated in the beginning of this instrument, that having undertaken the task of endeavouring to restore the pure Word of God to the people, and removing abuses which had grown up under the neglect of the means of holiness, they had been violently resisted, and were denied the liberty of carrying forward this holy design. But since, it was added, every prince ought to consider it his duty, not only to let his people hear the Word of God, but to protect them in so doing, they had, for their defence and safety, and according to the principles both of human and divine right, united themselves in a league for that purpose: they would, therefore, immediately proceed to the assistance of any one who might fall into danger from love to the Word of God, and would support him, and aid his deliverance by the best exercise of their power. But this christian union was not to be con-



sidered as opposed either to the Emperor or the states, but was to be viewed simply as a support of evangelical truth and peace in the Germanic empire, and a defence against injustice and intolerance.

These preparations for resistance were considered by the enemies of the Reformation as a challenge. The measures, indeed, which danger obliges us to adopt, are often unavoidably of a nature to hasten or increase the peril. Some of the protestant chiefs appear to have been fully aware of this. The Landgrave of Hesse, especially, looked forward with eagerness to the hour when he might receive the signal from his party to take the field, and there meet the foe, instead of waiting, as he feared, to be overwhelmed by secret machinations. This feeling, combined with a more enlarged view of christian truth than was possessed by others of their party, induced the Landgrave and some of his associates to propose an alliance with the Swiss protestant cantons. Unfortunately for the interests of the Reformation, Luther and Zuingli had adopted views respecting the Lord's Supper which those great men considered utterly incompatible with the same rule of faith. In the progress of that change at the head of which they stood, the two branches of the stream approached each other nearer and nearer, each rivalling the other in the rapidity of its course, and promising the mightiest of results, should they ever form one broad and deep current of the waters of truth.

The efforts of the Landgrave proved fruitless. It was declared by the Elector of Saxony, at the third meeting of the members of the league, held in the month of June, that he could not enter into fellowship with persons who held erroneous doctrines respecting the Lord's Supper. To this conclusion he was led by the strong opinions of Luther on the subject of the real presence. The awe with which the latter viewed the divine mystery of the communion, and the deep, fervent spirit which he manifested in the defence of his views, afford a sufficient proof that he went not, in reform, a step beyond his convictions. A less earnest, less devoted believer would probably have been influenced as

much by the exciting circumstances of the period as by the spirit of holiness. Luther appears always to have looked for the inspiration of truth; to have done nothing for which he did not at least believe that he had the sure warranty of the Word of God. The course which he had adopted, demanded frequent reconsideration; every measure taken regarded the eternal interests of immortal souls, the honour of the Saviour, the obedience due to the Divine Sanctifier; it is, therefore, not surprising that he shrunk with dread from any doctrinal proposition which implied a freer interpretation of Scripture than that which he employed. The opinions of Zuingle on the Lord's Supper were as opposed to his, as his were, in other respects, to those of the Church of Rome. This will account, in a great degree, for the proceedings of the Elector; and however much we may lament that the spiritual mind of Luther stopped short of the simple truth in respect to the communion, and that his sentiments respecting those who went farther than himself were so wanting in charity, we must, notwithstanding, admire the steadiness and devotion of the Elector and his adviser at the present period. It is well known that it would have secured the cause of Protestantism against the more immediate dangers to which it was exposed, could the German and Swiss reformers have combined in one body for its defence. But, "No, we must not sacrifice the purity of the gospel for any present advantage, even to the cause of its defenders!" was the elevated and evangelical sentiment implied in the conduct and declaration of the Saxon Protestants.

But there were other means of support to which these objections did not apply; and the activity of the members of the league was early directed to the procuring of assistance from more powerful allies than the Swiss cantons. The King of France and Henry VIII. of England stood in a political relation to the Emperor of Germany, which tended perpetually to the excitement of jealousy. Additional reasons for suspicion were found in the conduct and in the personal character of Charles; while, in the case of the French monarch,

almost every circumstance had taken place between them which could engender a bitter and undying hostility.\*

To these monarchs the Protestants now applied for countenance and support. An answer to their address was received from Francis I. in the month of April.† He expressed himself strongly in favour of a general council, and assured them that he had given no heed to the slanderous reports propagated by their enemies. A friendly feeling, he added, had always existed between himself and the German princes, and he therefore contemplated their proceedings with great interest; but advised them to press the cause which they had in hand by every pacific measure that was still open to them, before they appealed to arms.

The King of England wrote in a similar tone, professing sentiments of esteem and amity, and acknowledging the necessity of a reform of the Church. With the feelings, however, of a monarch who dreaded every movement which even remotely affected his dignity, he exhorted the reformers to separate themselves as far as possible from those evil-minded men who undervalued authorities, and endeavoured to proclaim a universal equality.

Charles V. beheld with equal anger and concern the proceedings of the league. They involved him in difficulties which demanded a course of conduct in itself intricate and dangerous. The Turkish forces threatened the speedy invasion of Germany; and, such were the ability and power of their leader, that it would evidently require a general and united effort on the part of the Germanic states to repress his insolence. Charles

\* "Charles V. and Francis I.," says Villers, "are the two principal actors in the events of this period. The colossal increase of the Austrian power was the first occasion by which the other states discovered the necessity of uniting themselves against it. From that moment the character of France was decided, and its monarch became, by the very nature of things, the most formidable rival of Charles. But to effect the alliance of the states interested in the matter, and to give the requisite energy and efficacy to this confederation, was not easy. The Reformation afforded the required assistance, and by its aid the European opposition was easily organized."—*Essai sur l'Esprit, &c., de la Reform.*, p. 222.

† The letter of Francis is dated the 21st of April, and that of Henry VIII., May 3, 1531.



seemed to have but the choice of yielding to the demands of the Protestants, or making the perilous attempt of sustaining the onset of a mighty enemy with divided forces and a disputed sway. The dangers attending the latter mode of proceeding are obvious; but the former, situated as the Emperor now was, presented difficulties of no ordinary kind. He had formed an alliance with the Pope, from which he expected to reap the full advantage of his friendship and influence. On his fulfilling the conditions of this union depended, in a great measure, the extent and stability of his power among the catholic states of the empire. To incur the enmity of the Protestants was dangerous; but it would evidently have been far more so to expose himself to the suspicion of being cold in the cause of Catholicism. The only step, therefore, which could be taken at the moment, was that of endeavouring to conciliate the Protestants without yielding to their demands, and to manifest his zeal for the Pope while he treated his opponents with secret and deceptious respect.

This line of conduct, pointed out by the circumstances of the times, not foreign to the favourite maxims of courts at any period, and especially accordant with the ordinary policy of Charles, was that which he for a time adopted. "Assist us," said he, "in the struggle against the common enemy, and we can then consider the measures which it behoves us to take for the re-establishment of religious concord." But the reformers felt too deeply, and reasoned too sternly, respecting the proceedings at Augsburg. "We will refuse nothing," they answered, "for the defence of our father-land; but we have been threatened with penalties and punishments to induce us to sacrifice our faith. We have prayed that these threats might be rescinded, and without effect. No answer, even, has been rendered to our earnest entreaties. Till we know, therefore, what is to be our fate, we cannot weaken our means of self-defence in proceeding to meet an enemy abroad less to be dreaded than the enemy at home."\*

\* This desire to provide for their self-defence seems on no occasion to have awakened any other thought in the minds of the Elector and his friends



The conduct of the Protestants on this occasion has been the subject of much dispute among men of loyal and cautious tempers. It requires, however, a very exact knowledge of prevailing feelings, of the views taken by the states of Germany, at the time, respecting their relations to the Emperor, and to each other, to decide this matter aright. If the several princes and independent cities viewed themselves in the light of subjects to the imperial chief, they undoubtedly violated one of the first duties of feudal submission by the conduct which was now pursued; but if they only regarded themselves as leagued together for mutual safety and advantage, and as still preserving the main rights of sovereignty, though yielding some for the common good, the threats of Charles, and the declared injustice of the fiscal chamber, afforded them a plea amply sufficient to justify their present line of conduct. It would demand a careful discussion of many such points to decide this question; but if we consider the character of the persons concerned, the motives by which they were generally influenced, their known sentiments, and the piety of their teachers, we shall have strong reasons for believing that they did not offend against their conscience in resisting the present decisions of the Emperor. They were not mere politicians; they were not agitators. Never till now had they been engaged in any contest for rights and privileges. Contented with the degree of power to which they were born, they had governed their states in the spirit of paternal sovereignty; and, till the ambition of Charles and his union with the Pope had excited the most painful apprehensions, they lived in secure and happy concord with the head of the empire.

than that of not leaving their dominions when so much danger was apprehended. But Maimburg insinuates that they threatened not only not to oppose but to join the Turks. "*Protestantes vero aperte Imperatori significaverunt, &c., non tantum ad auxilia imperii nihil esse collaturos, nisi pacem et liberum religionis suæ exercitium obtinerent, verum cum Solymanno potius vires juncturos, ut ab eo libertatem istam, quam Christianis in imperio suo indulgebat, impetrarent.*"—Sec. 4. Seckendorf, lib. III., p. 19.

Pallavicino says, on the same side, "*Protestantes vero non subsidia solum pernegabant, sed se cum Solymanno conspiraturos minitabantur, si quid ipsis molestiæ in negotio conscientiæ infligeretur.*"—Hist. Con. Trident., lib. III., c. 9.

It can scarcely be supposed, therefore, that when filled with a desire to revive evangelical truth, they would act, unless constrained by conviction, against received and long-cherished sentiments of obedience; or that they would have chosen the moment of spiritual emancipation from error to undertake a design unauthorized by the law of God. To render unto God the things which are God's, and to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, was ever the maxim of the Saxon reformers. By this they measured, conducted and justified their proceedings; and it behoves those who question their conduct on the occasion referred to, to consider how much evidence is required to prove an offence against those whose character and temper indicate feelings of the most contrary tendency.

In the painful state of doubt and apprehension in which both parties now stood, hope was suddenly revived by an intimation from the Emperor that he still desired to cultivate pacific and friendly views. Notice to this effect was sent to the Protestants assembled at Frankfurt, and both the Elector and the Landgrave seemed to regard the circumstance as prophetic of better times. But a brief consultation made it apparent to their colleagues that the mere professions of the Emperor ought not to divert them from the prudential line of policy which they had begun to pursue. "Change," said they, "the character of the fiscal chamber: oblige the judges to cease from their present violations of truth and equity; and then we will listen to any wishes that may be expressed respecting the defence of the empire against the approaches of the Turks." But, insisting on the pacific sentiments now promulged, Charles intimated to the Elector of Saxony his willingness to reassemble the Diet at Spire, that the difficulties in which the disputes had originated might be reconsidered. The Elector regarded this proposal with less satisfaction than Charles intended or desired to inspire. He foresaw that the renewal of such debates as those which took place at former Diets could tend but little to the promotion of either piety or tranquillity. His answer, therefore, was, that unless the Emperor would secure both him and his associates from

any violation of their rights or liberties, he would not attend the meeting; that he must also be permitted to bring his theologians with him, and this with the understanding that they should be allowed freely to preach the Word of God: still further, he expressed a hope that the Emperor, who had spoken of him as a follower of Zuingli, and an Anabaptist, would retract expressions so little merited or called for.

The confidence which the Protestants felt in the justice of their cause, and the strength by which they were supported, are plainly evidenced in their conduct on the present occasion. It had been supposed that they might be persuaded to remain silent. This notion was founded in the imperfect view taken by their enemies of the cause and nature of the controversy. The object of every preacher of the Reformation was to make known the gospel, in the highest and most comprehensive sense of that term. It was from this motive he derived the arguments which justified his claim to independence; the consolations which strengthened his heart when oppressed by opposition; and all the light which mantled around him when he pursued sin and superstition to their dark retreats. Had Luther remained contented with attacking some particular corruption of the Roman Church, those who followed in his track might have been induced, by the prospect of more favourable seasons for discussion, to hold, for a while, their peace. But the principles of evangelism had been unfolded to them by the light of God's Spirit: a way opened for them by the wisdom of His providence. To have promised, therefore, to be silent on the subjects alluded to, would have involved either the ruin of protestant principles, or an offence against candour and ingenuousness not less destructive of every principle of religion. Silence on points of discipline or ceremony was allowable, perhaps expedient; and if tranquillity could have been secured by a temporary suppression of opinion in lesser matters, the friends of holiness and peace would have had little to dread. But how would it have been possible for those who had found and believed that justification is of faith, and not of works,



to perform the office of preachers, and leave out any allusion to this subject? Or would it have been to act with christian simplicity to promise silence on points of inferior importance, while the real cause of the dispute, the cause of all the convulsions in the Church, so bitterly complained of by the Roman hierarchy, remained the same, and was secretly operating in every lesson taught by the sermons, the prayers, and the discipline of the Protestants? As it was impossible for them, therefore, to cease from declaring the main truths of the gospel, it would have been disingenuous in them to seek or accept indulgence under the pretence of refraining from discussions of less actual importance to the interests of the Papacy.

While the reply of the reformers to the other requirements of the Emperor fully expressed their firm adherence to the Augsburg Confession, the boldness with which they rejected the claims of Ferdinand was not less expressive of their desire for political freedom and justice. The historian of the Reformation is not unfrequently surprised by this mingling of motives, and the consequent appearance of unexpected difficulties in his search after the causes of events. Disposed to examine every thing in its relation to the sublime work which gives a name to his labours, he looks, at first, only for the workings of faith, holiness and truth, or their opposites; but, as he proceeds, he finds a vast succession of intermediate influences diverting the stream of thought and action from its direct course. Were he not to notice these unexpected diversions and modifying powers, the result of his statements, however conformable to the anxious anticipations of holiness, would then be as contrary to the truth of things, as they are now too often opposed to the hopes and prayers of the believer.

The proper feeling of Luther was,\* that whatever regarded the election of the King of the Romans had

\* The chancellor, Dr. Bruck, or Pontanus, whom Luther styles his dear friend and master, had applied to him for instruction in this matter. "You have nobly," said Luther to the Elector, "proved your steadfast faith in the power and goodness of God by your conduct at Augsburg; let it not sink now under the apprehension of future events. God alone is the master and disposer of the future." The whole of this letter is an admirable specimen of Luther's good sense as well as piety.—*Briefe. De Wette, t. iv., p. 201.*



better be left entirely out of consideration at the present juncture of affairs. But the princes could with difficulty be brought to see how, in treating with a political ruler, they could refrain from viewing things in their inseparable political relations. In the several meetings, therefore, which they held at Smalcalde, Schweinfurt and Nuremberg, the settlement of a plan of pacification was perpetually interrupted by the introduction of politics. It may be a question whether Charles would have listened to them at all, if they had not manifested a resolution which partook as much of the spirit of the camp, as it did, in other respects, of that of christians and confessors. He had been long accustomed to view every thing in reference to a proud and far-extending plan of family aggrandizement. Could he have secured his object by simple and direct means, he would probably have won a character for magnanimity and generous condescension. Opposed, he seems only to have studied how he might so balance contradictory forces, as to carry his own purposes through the midst of a selfish and temporary neutrality. For an instant the Church party and the reformers appeared to possess equal weight in the great machine of public affairs. As a monarch, he had then to consider which took for its principles those most conformable to the recognised maxims of state. It required not long to decide this question. Protestantism claimed a freedom for mankind, the real nature of which was not fully understood, perhaps, even by its advocates. "My kingdom is not of this world" was scarcely less comprehended by Pilate than were the enunciations of christian liberty, at a later period, by the disciples of Christ. "Use not liberty for a cloak of licentiousness," and "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," conveyed a maxim and a doctrine as wise as they were sublime. But they acted only on minds and hearts inspired with reverence for the gospel; and their efficiency in subduing every species of unholy libertinism, every aspiration or attempt which might weaken the bands of order, could be appreciated by those alone who looked at the system according to the intentions of its

author. The principles of the Reformation were, in the first place, likely to be misunderstood, just in proportion as they were spiritual. It was not to be supposed that the persons who resisted its progress, and persecuted its preachers, would readily listen to the assertion that its only aim was holiness and truth. But while the character of the purposed changes was misrepresented by the common prejudices of its opponents, and objections of a very powerful nature were thus furnished to the jealous statesmen and rulers of the day, it must not be denied that, in all important revolutions of opinion, watchfulness on the part of the state is a positive duty; and that no sovereign would be acting either wisely or honestly, if he did not cautiously guard against the excitement of sudden changes. In estimating, therefore, the conduct of Charles and the catholic princes, we must not hastily conclude that they necessarily violated the laws of humanity and holiness in not at once yielding to the call for reformation. The signals, the language, the spirit and results of that blessed change are now so distinctly understood by those who value the full preaching of the gospel, that they can scarcely comprehend the difficulties which must have stood in the way of opponents at the first revival of its truths. But, besides the obscurity which ignorance and prejudice threw around the path of the reformers, and the opposition resulting from the ordinary anxieties of political rulers, it ought not to be forgotten, that the theory of Protestantism, the pure, unalloyed, spiritual development of its principles, has never been realized. At its very birth, human passions, anxieties and troubles pressed close upon the hearts of its supporters; and its growth was attended with signs and forebodings which warned its truest friends that it was not in Protestantism itself that they must rest, but in the Bible to which it pointed, and in the spirit for which it taught men to pray. The efforts which Luther himself had to make in repressing the ebullitions of some of his associates; the too hasty overthrow of monastic establishments, with the questionable transfer of their revenues; the uncertainty which prevailed as to some, now considered

vital, points both of doctrine and polity; these indicate a state of things which may account for a portion, at least, of the Emperor's unwillingness to yield to the pressure of the change. To these points, so worthy of notice, must be added the important circumstance, that the rising of the Anabaptists was so closely connected, in point of time, with the work of Luther, that the confounding of the one with the other was but according to a common though dangerous error. That of events which happen in quick succession, the one must be the cause and the other the effect, is presupposed and contended for in a thousand controversies. It is no wonder, therefore, that the catholic party generally asserted the union of the Anabaptists and of the insurgent peasants with the Protestants. The supposition that this was the case must, while it prevailed, have strongly disposed not only the Emperor, but every other prince, to wage war against their principles. When the truth even was discovered, the impression would, as in other cases, still remain: so little are men naturally inclined to search their hearts for the poisonous fragments of error left there, when the pride of reason taught them to break it in the mass, from their minds.

From these and like considerations we may gather some of the reasons which led the Emperor to oppose the spread of Protestantism. But while willing to suppress the progress of a change fraught with danger to every species of arbitrary power, he could not at the present juncture establish his views without great caution and circumspection. Taking advantage, therefore, of the feeling which now prevailed among some of the reformers, he urged on them fresh proposals of peace. These were gladly received by the Elector of Saxony and his more immediate associates. Accordingly, on the 23d of July,\* a treaty was signed at Nuremberg, and thus was commenced a series of transactions distinguished not less for their vexatious uselessness, than were the events in which they arose for their splendour and importance.†

\* The instrument was not signed by the Emperor till the 2d of August. —Sleidan, t. i., liv. VIII., p. 343.

† It appears by the remarks of Pallavicino, "that no intention was entertained of leaving the Protestants in the peaceful enjoyment of their rights



The Landgrave of Hesse, and the greater portion of the reformers, regarded this shadow of a pacification with extreme disgust. They discovered in it, more clearly than ever, that want of liberality and ingenuousness which formed so frequently a characteristic of the Emperor's policy. By one article of the treaty, all proceedings against the Protestants, on account of their religion, were declared to be stopped; but the value of this concession was almost wholly destroyed by the command with which it was accompanied. "Let not these things be published," conveyed, at once, the suspicion that Charles intended to take advantage of the truce by secretly undermining the foundations of their union, too strongly formed for open assault.

But affairs were not in a state to admit long of this artful and temporizing method of proceeding. The Emperor soon discovered that the Protestants, though satisfied in part and for the moment, still remained, as a body, in the same unsettled and suspicious separation from the rest of the community. It was evident that they did not feel satisfied of their safety, and that they must either be altogether subdued by some stern act of power, or admitted to the complete enjoyment of a religious liberty, at that time not known or conceived of in the world.\*

In the month of August the Diet assembled at Ratisbon, and Charles then freely confessed that, notwithstanding the efforts he had made, every day gave fresh

as citizens beyond the present season of difficulty. "*Alterum fuit integram libertatem Lutheranis haud indulgeri, sed solum usque ad concilium intra sesquiannum habendum; eoque non habito, usque ad alium conventum; adeoque potestatem sibi non ademerat, ubi ea iis angustiis emersisset, illos ad servanda priora edicta, sopita quidem, sed non extincta, compellendi. Verum huic concessioni non minus imperii ordines adversati quam pontificii administrari.*"—Hist. Con. Trident., lib. III., c. ix.

\* Charles satisfied neither party by the measures he had adopted, for many of the Roman Catholics regarded his proceedings as worthy of the greatest reprehension. "Princes and emperors," said they, "are obliged, under pain of censures, to extirpate heretics, and to employ both their power and their lives for that object; and let the Emperor Charles," they continued, "expect the divine vengeance for having violated this obligation."—Paul Sarpi, Hist. du Con. Trent., t. i., l. I., p. 117.

Pallavicino accuses Fra. Paoli of committing many and grave errors in attributing the continuance of the troubles to the Pope's backwardness to promote peace. "*Per hæc plures et graves insinuantur errores.*"—Lib. III., c. x.

proofs of the increase of religious dissensions. Impressed, he said, with a deep sense of the evils which thence arose, he had sent an ambassador to the Pope and the College of Cardinals, earnestly entreating that preparations might be made for the speedy assembling of a general council. To manifest, at the same time, some degree of willingness to meet the complaints of the Protestants respecting the fiscal chamber, he appointed two commissioners to act in his name, and gave them for assistants the Elector Palatine, the Elector of Mayence, the Bishops of Strasburg and Spire, and other persons of rank and influence. But every act of toleration, whether the result of justice or of policy only, which the Emperor passed, endangered his popularity with the catholic party. The pacification of Nuremberg, while it so little satisfied the Protestants, excited loud murmurs and complaints on the side of their opponents. Ferdinand is said to have wept when speaking on the subject to one of the ambassadors, and to have exclaimed, "I would most willingly shed my blood for the faith of my Church, and the authority of the Pope."

The chief mover in all the late transactions was the Elector of Saxony. Declining strength had for some time warned him that he was approaching the boundary of his earthly career. He saw with grief the dangers which surrounded his subjects, the difficulties which strewed the path of the venerable men to whom he owed the treasures of evangelical knowledge. In the strength of a living and enlightened faith, he rose superior to every selfish thought or apprehension; but the responsibilities of his station weighed heavily on his tender and benevolent spirit; and he was thereby led to calculate consequences with a caution which would probably have been unknown to his character, had he stood alone in the conflict. The part which he had taken in the Reformation was marked with the best features of princely virtue. Neither slow to hear, nor unwilling to be convinced, and, though cautious in resolving, not backward to act when his resolution was taken, he protected the preachers of the gospel in their early efforts, not as one given to change, but as a devout lover of God and of truth.

Luther ever found in him a faithful friend, an attentive listener to his expositions of the gospel, and a firm and zealous supporter in every plan devised for the furtherance of its cause. In all cases they spoke freely to each other of that which seemed needed to the perfection of christian conduct. The Elector would warn Luther against the danger of his sometimes hot and untempered boldness; and Luther would intimate to the Elector the occasional want, in his measures, of those manifestations of faith in the superintendence of Christ over his Church, which he regarded as essential to true wisdom.

God removed this excellent man from his scene of duty and warfare on earth, on the 16th of August. The loss of such an ally would have been felt still more deeply than it was, had not Divine Providence raised up, in the person of his successor, a friend of the Reformation not less pious and consistent. John Frederic united to the devotion and other virtues of his father a greater degree of firmness, more activity and resolution, a larger capacity for public business, and as the result of long observation, an extensive acquaintance with the principles of the Reformation.\*

The part which the new Elector had taken in the late proceedings entitled him to the respect of both parties. He had used his best efforts to promote the establishment of peace, and for that end had advised the Protestants to assist the Emperor in the Turkish war, and to leave nothing unattempted whereby any suspicions respecting their loyalty might be effectually removed. But neither his personal exertions, nor the general efforts of the party, could overcome the designing spirit which worked at this time in the courts of justice. We ought not, perhaps, to attribute the oppression which the Protestants suffered in law proceedings to the direct influence of either Charles or the Pope. The injustice of which they complained had its origin in the imperfection

\* It has been said of this excellent man that he might, in some respects, be described as a greater Lutheran than Luther himself. Luther, however, from several passages in his writings, appears to have regarded him with somewhat less of deep and lively affection than he did his venerable father. —Pfizer, *Luthers Leben*, p. 701.



of the system under which they lived. It matters not whether difference of religion, or any other circumstance, provokes dissension; it is only in the most perfect state of jurisprudence that the weaker party can hope for justice.

But the effect of the manifold corruptions which prevailed in the fiscal chamber, was a daily increase of protestant zeal and ardour. Several of the free cities, among which Strasburg stood conspicuous, echoed, with loud and deep complaints, the sentiments expressed by the princes. Charles was too good a politician not to know that to provoke an enemy is not to weaken or to conquer him. He could scarcely fail to perceive that a train of new feelings, fully as inimical to his plans as Protestantism, would soon be excited, were the courts of justice left unreformed. A fresh intimation, therefore, was given, that the measures already nominally adopted should shortly be fully put in execution. This promise appeased, for the moment, the rising storm; but Charles had left Germany, and the Protestants remained as dependent as ever on the prejudiced, the capricious, and dishonest officers of the courts.\*

The difficulty which the reformers found in obtaining justice in smaller matters, presented itself in a more formidable shape when they again turned their attention to the subject of a general council. That which they suffered in their private affairs from the injustice of the Germanic lawyers, they had to encounter in all the relations and concerns of their faith, from the counsels and power of the Roman court. It was against oppression, in both cases, that they were driven to appeal. In both cases an independent authority was to be sought, the decisions of which should have a universal application. That of the Emperor might, in theory, be considered such, in respect to the complaints of the people and states of Germany. If he neglected to exercise his power, or exercised it but partially, he committed an

\* Seckendorf, lib. III., sec. 7, p. 47.—The Emperor, it is said, directed the judge and assessors of the chamber to act in conformity with the principles set forth in the formulary lately signed; but, to prove how little had been done, a question was immediately put, "What is meant by the terms there used?"

offence peculiarly great against the duties of his station. But in relation to the griefs which afflicted so large a portion of the people, viewed as Christians, there was no power at present existing to which an appeal could properly be made. The Emperor had no authority to decide a controversy purely evangelical, and the Roman Pontiff was himself accused of being the main cause of the evils for which the remedy was sought. Such was the magnitude of the controversy, the number and dignity of the parties accused, that it required the creation of a special dictatorship, and one which should possess so completely the characteristics of justice, dignity, authority, that no class, either in its political or religious relations, might be able fairly to object to its decisions.

A free and general council, composed of the representatives of the Christian Church, could alone lay claim to such an authority. In an assembly of this kind, the mind, as well as the power, the feelings, the temper and aspirations of Christendom would be represented. Kings might, without the slightest sacrifice of honour, acknowledge its supremacy, and bind themselves to obey its decisions. They had already confessed their allegiance to the Cross; had taught their subjects to proclaim that the kingdoms of the earth were become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; and it was only under the sceptre of the Saviour that the Church universal could be assembled. The mass of mankind neither had, nor could, nor ever can have, any general representation, except in such a meeting. Universal interests are sacrificed to particular, and the particular are soon swallowed up in some few exclusive and engrossing privileges. Nations are jealous of each other in whatever regards political power, and individuals will rarely in thought or action, rise superior to the influences of personal ambition, or their country's prejudices. A mere political representation can never overcome the evils which are fostered under such a state of things, or satisfy the claims of mankind, when awakened to higher than temporal pursuits. In the full and collected strength of the Church of Christ, on the contrary,

both the power and the means are present for establishing the noblest interests of the world. The just authority of rulers receives thereby a sanction which consecrates its exercise. Believers in the gospel behold the sublime fulfilment of their Master's promises to his united people; and the cold, the listless and unwilling members of the community, witnessing so grand and powerful an assembly of the wisest of men, with those to whom the dignity of station gives an external pomp and splendour, may be moved to cherish a more reverential feeling for the sceptre of their disregarded Saviour. Here, too, the necessities of the humblest are acknowledged, claims the most complicated investigated, questions that refused to yield to divided inquiries answered, venerable customs, decayed through negligence, restored, and necessary additions to discipline made, without any violation of the sacred rule of primitive example.

Such would be the character and authority of a general council, if constituted according to the principles which give vitality to Christ's Church. It is evident that both the ability and the right of an assembly, assuming the power of an œcumenical council, must depend upon its being truly a representation of the Church at large. To deny to any portion of the worshippers of the Saviour a voice in such an assembly would be to destroy its very existence; nor would the same consequence fail to follow, were any separate power, or any individual in the meeting, to be allowed to control its decisions. The difficulties, therefore, attending the summoning of a general council, must have increased in a tenfold degree, as the Church became subject to men of haughty spirit and secular ambition; when its uniformity was an object sought, not for the sake of love and harmony, but for the purposes of power, and the Lord's heritage was to be secured and guarded, not for his glory, but for the aggrandizement of the false prophet and the sensual priest.

At the period of which we are speaking, every difficulty in the calling of a council, which had its birth in former times, was arrived at its full growth; and others



sprang up at once into gigantic force and stature. The Popes trembled whenever they reviewed the proceedings of the last century. They saw in the history of the times, so fresh in their memory, how soon, if not their Church, their throne might be shaken. The question, even, had never been settled, whether their authority was superior or inferior to that of general councils, or in what degree their claim to infallibility was involved in the peculiar nature and privileges of such assemblies. But in addition to the fears thereby generated, the loud voice of Protestantism had excited others hitherto unknown. The mention of a general council, by men who refused to acknowledge any infallible authority but Scripture, might naturally alarm those who could only hope to retain their influence so long as it was thus supported. In so far, therefore, as the court of Rome had certain political objects, one of the foremost was the balancing of interests in such a manner, that all being in suspense, nothing might disturb its formerly unquestioned authority. The deciding of any part of the complicated question involved in the present state of things threatened so general a change, that to create a power which could decide was the very thing to be avoided. This was no secret among the politicians of those times. The Emperor, the Kings of France and England, and the other ruling princes of Christendom, fully understood the origin of the unwillingness manifested by the Pope to aid them in assembling a council. But, ready as they were to oppose his pretensions, whenever they pressed upon their own interests, not one of them was ready to hazard the good opinion of the Pontiff, or to disturb the serenity of their consciences, in respect to his authority, for the sake of the Church at large, or the purity of the faith.

But Charles had so often pledged himself to employ his influence on this subject, that he could no longer offer excuses without danger to his more immediate interests. On his return, therefore, to Spain, he passed through Italy, for the purpose of meeting the Pope at Bologna. Their interview on this occasion was not productive of so much satisfaction to these potentates as that which

had taken place a short time before.\* The Pontiff having regarded the late concessions of Charles as indicative of too much toleration towards the Protestants, now desired to hear from his lips some strong disavowal of the laxity of which he was accused. Charles, on the other hand, foresaw the dangers in which the Pope would involve him, if he persisted in refusing to call a council, according to the demands of the Protestants.

The first acts of this important meeting respected some of those numerous political questions which were continually springing out of the unsettled state of the Italian republics. These being determined, a formal assembly was convened to take into consideration the time and mode of calling a general council. At the termination of the debate, it was resolved that the Pope and the Emperor should each send a minister into Germany, and endeavour to persuade the heads of the different parties to agree to the terms proposed for summoning the assembly.

It was to the Elector of Saxony that the distinguished personages charged with this high office made their first appeal. "The Pope and the Emperor," they said, "had been lately much engaged in considering by what measures peace might be restored to the Church. It was the expectation of the former," they added, "that when the Emperor came into Italy, he would be able, by the wise exercise of his authority, to subdue the spirit of dissension which distracted the country. But this hope proved false. He had, therefore, again conferred with his ally, and both had concluded that no better or more expeditious remedy could be provided for the existing evils than the summoning of a general council. As many particulars, however, had to be considered before such a step could be taken, the Elector and his associates were called upon to express their opinions on the matter. The Pope, it was said, had, after long deliberation, fixed on Placentia, Bologna, or Mantua, as the most proper place for holding the meet-

\* Pallavicino, *Hist. Con. Trident.*, lib. III., c. xii. It was well known that the Pope only preserved his alliance with the Emperor till he should be able to place himself in a better state of security.—Sleidan, t. i., liv. VIII., p. 345.

ing. He had also determined on many other points as necessary to secure the efficacy of the measure to be thus adopted, and more especially to induce those who should attend the council to obey its decrees, whatsoever they might be.\*

The minister of the Emperor confirmed the words of the papal legate, and omitted no argument which seemed calculated to excite amicable feelings in the mind of the Elector. But that prince was too well acquainted with the importance which would be attached to his decisions, to speak without careful meditation. His answer was such as might have been expected, after the events which had lately occurred. "He heartily thanked God," he said, "that the Pope and the Emperor had at length resolved upon the only measure which could restore peace to Christendom. His own prayers, and those of his people, would not be wanting in imploring the grace and the blessing of Heaven for the furtherance of the design; but he had many allies," he added, "to consult, before any particular reply could be given to the proposals of the Pontiff."†

On the 24th of June the protestant princes and deputies held another meeting at Smalcalde. The affair of the council was then carefully considered. Questions arose, therefrom, which carried the reformers back to the origin of their principles, and forward to the hoped-for period of a general emancipation from the tyranny of Rome. An equal degree of caution and boldness may be discovered in the sentiments which now began to be common among them. They knew how much they had to dread from the policy of the Pope and the Emperor, and that not a point would be lost sight of by which the council might be rendered inimical to their interests. It was well understood that, in the year 1529, serious intentions were formed by those potentates to employ force against the reformers, and that they had only ceased from these designs to

\* Sleidan, t. i. liv. VIII., p. 346.

† Guicciardini, Coment., lib. I., p. 20.



pursue a more timid course, when convinced of the power which was prepared to resist them. The subtlety of the papal counsels was proverbial. It had set an example to every court in Christendom unable to support its pretensions by open warfare. In this respect, therefore, the Protestants were to defend themselves by the exercise of all the well-advised caution which their situation and christian holiness might justify. But they had now the means of resistance, should they be assailed by open violence or oppression. The league which had been formed gave them a weight in the scale which could not be despised. On looking, moreover, beyond the circle of their own immediate influence, the times presented signs that contributed still further to increase their hopes. England already rose, bold and steadfast as a rock, above the angry waves of antient darkness and superstition. Even the alliance between the Pope and the Emperor afforded arguments in favour of confidence. The former had long felt more disposed to unite with the King of France than with Charles. He saw in the character of the Emperor qualities which allowed him little reason to hope that he could permanently or materially influence his movements. Francis I., on the contrary, was imbued with all those chivalrous feelings which had, in earlier times, so often brought the proudest monarch to the foot of the papal throne. Ardent, generous, and unsuspecting, he readily lent an ear to the suggestions of both friends and enemies, if they savoured of aught which awakened his love of enterprise, and revived the associations of his youth. It is not difficult to discover how many reasons the Pope would have to prefer the friendship of such a monarch as this, to the cold, politic, and formal alliance proffered by Charles. So earnest, indeed, were both parties to cement the union thus desired, that Francis offered to marry his second son to a niece of the Pope, while the latter, eager above all things to exalt his family, gladly promised to endow the bride with the richest lands in Italy.\*

\* Guicciardini, *Comment.*, lib. I., p. 21.

Aware of these circumstances, and not ignorant of the grand and ever-animating truth, that all things work together for good to them who engage sincerely in promoting the honour of God, the protestant princes, and the deputies from the associated free cities, firmly resisted the present attempts to beguile them from the strong post they had succeeded in occupying. "We anxiously desire," said they, "the assembling of a council, but it must be free and general,\* such a one, at least, as shall afford to Germany and its people the right of defending, from Scripture, the doctrines which they profess.† This is the council which the Emperor and the Diet have promised us. The designs of the Pope oppose, not only in the present instance, but in all others, the prayers of universal Christendom. Under the shadow of an assembly wholly submitted to himself, he seeks the increase of his power and the ruin of his opponents. He speaks of the precedents afforded by former councils; we desire to go back, not to those which have been held since the corruption of the Church, but to those which were governed solely by Scripture and the spirit of primitive piety. Let the assembly which the Pontiff prepares to call, be governed according to this rule, or let us find, when it is called, that we can do any thing in it for the glory of God, and we will then, after receiving due assurances of safety, appear there either in person or by our ambassadors."

The protestant party was at this time under a twofold species of influence. It cannot be denied that the political standing of many of its members had an important share in producing the decisions to which it was now speedily arriving. The Landgrave of Hesse was this year engaged in a war for the restoration of the Duke of Wirtemberg, which, terminating successfully, afforded a powerful though only collateral support to the protestant interests. But happily the sentiments of the pious and enlightened men in whom this mighty change had its

\* The Pope promised that it should be free and general, but in very cautious language: "Ut id liberum et universale esset, eo nempe, qui in ecclesia circa concilia œcumenica semper observatus fuisset, modo."—Maimburg.

† Sleidan, t. i., liv. VIII., 349.—Seckendorf.

commencement, were still the rule to which every class of reformers was content to appeal. The meeting at Smalcalde, therefore, was followed by a conference of the divines, to whom the examination of the proposals for a council was now committed. Their feelings on the subject were plainly dictated by those general considerations of equity and truth, to which no reply could be given by a party not willing to adopt the same guides. That so complicated a system as that into which the government of the Church of Rome had grown would admit of speedy alteration, could not be expected by wise and thoughtful men. Few, perhaps, would have been disposed to regard that Church with any other than filial feelings, had it manifested even a partial tendency to improvement. The demands in which the Reformation began were few and moderate; they were multiplied and magnified in the mirror of papal pride and austerity; and that which happened at the beginning of the Reformation was, in some degree, repeated during the debates respecting a council. The Protestants would have been unreasonable to suppose that the court of Rome was to remain inactive while they were preparing both for defence and attack. But it does not appear that this was the case. Their main objection arose from the fact, that the Pontiff sought to act as a judge in a cause where he stood by turns as the accuser and accused. Whichever character he chose to assume, he could not honestly combine therewith the right to adjudicate. The freedom of the council would plainly not consist in the number of the members assembled, nor even in the liberty granted to debate, without restraint, on the questions proposed for consideration. If indeed free, it would owe this characteristic to the independence manifested in its conclusions, in the unbiassed authority of those who should pronounce its definitive and confirmatory sentence.

By the death of Clement VII., which happened on the 25th of September 1534, the views of both parties underwent some degree of change. The late  
A. D. 1534-6. Pontiff had struggled in vain against the increasing force of Protestantism. His policy and influ-



ence, the power of his allies, and the precepts of his Church, were alike insufficient for the objects they contemplated. Whatever may be our feelings of triumph, as Protestants, at beholding the discomfiture with which all these antagonist forces were overpowered, that exultation would necessarily be mingled with milder sentiments, had the Pope been simply the defender of his Church. But in the midst of the worst troubles of Christendom, of the most perilous trials to which Rome had ever been subjected, both Leo X. and his successors were constantly and intently employed in schemes for aggrandizing their families. The means they adopted for this purpose would have been justified with difficulty, had they stood in the situation only of temporal potentates; but they violated thereby every principle to which they were indebted for their own elevation, and for the wealth and grandeur of their Church. In the celibacy of the priest was supposed to be found the freedom of the priesthood from all the domestic selfishnesses of ordinary life. The riches heaped upon the Church were bestowed by the loving confidence of its members, believing that they would be re-distributed through consecrated channels. What, then, was the sin of those who, availing themselves of a trust and elevation so peculiarly sacred, employed almost every privilege of their order to enrich their own connexions, and those frequently the basest of mankind?

Clement VII. had been celebrated for his political skill, and the people of Rome hailed his elevation with expressions of proud delight. So little reason, however, had they to rejoice at the event, that during his pontificate they suffered, not only by the diminished splendour of their Church, but in the ruin of their houses, misfortunes hitherto unknown to the children of the holy city. The Romanist historian of the Council of Trent has acknowledged, therefore, that if the people rejoiced at the election of Clement, they expressed no less gratification when they heard of his decease.\*

\* The character of this Pontiff is thus described by Varillas: "If we call him avaricious, deceitful and faithless, we shall have alluded only to the least of his vices."—Guicciardini ascribes his errors to fear. Pallavicino

The choice of his successor was influenced by his dying recommendation. At such a period, the safety of the Church evidently depended greatly upon the power and ability of its chief. Clement knew well the composition of the sacred college; and had he not so generally manifested a desire to support, at any expense, the dignity of his family, we might have regarded his recommendation of Alexander Farnese as the simple result of his experience and discernment. But Alexander was chosen; and while few of his brethren could have offered better worldly claims to the honour, not one, perhaps, was more destitute of Christian grace, or any of the qualifications which should belong to spiritual authority.\* An illegitimate progeny bore testimony to the licentiousness of his past life; and the splendour of the palace which he had built at Rome manifested the pride and luxury which exhausted the revenues of the rich bishopric of Parma, and of the numerous offices bestowed upon him by successive Pontiffs. In the character of his offspring the full influence of his example was illustrated by proofs the most melancholy and convincing; and the course which he almost immediately adopted, proved that the Church was still to be the nurse both of his own and of his children's vices.

But Paul III., though negligent of every nobler duty of his station, was keenly alive to the temporal interests of the Roman See. He had grown up under the shadow of its wide-spreading power and magnificence; and now that he saw himself invested with the supreme direction of its affairs, he resolved to put forth the full energy of his political wisdom. His predecessor had pursued a system which it would have been

attributes the unpopularity of Clement, not only to his unprosperous reign, but to his want of the shining qualities which distinguished his celebrated predecessor and relative Leo. X. "He had those powers and dispositions," says the historian, "which would have made him an excellent statesman, but which were not sufficient to make him a good prince."—Hist. Con. Trident., lib. III., c. 16.

\* It has been affirmed that one of the motives which influenced the cardinals in their choice of Alexander Farnese was his age and apparent infirmity. Such, however, was the state of affairs at this time, that the supposition is scarcely consistent with what is known respecting the fears and apprehensions of the body viewing the approaching council.

impossible to uphold much longer. It sufficed to ward off the expected evil from himself; but it neither lessened the force of the antagonist, nor made provision for meeting the tempest when it should come. Paul III. was fully sensible of this; and his first thoughts were, therefore, directed to the long and as yet vainly agitated questions which regarded the assembling of the council.

That he resolved upon executing the design of calling such a meeting, admits of little doubt; but there is as little reason for believing that he had any serious intention of satisfying the demands of the Protestants, or of employing any other means than those of power and artifice for healing the wounds inflicted on the Church. The celebrated Peter Paul Verger was sent into Germany to examine the state of affairs among the reformers. Influenced in no slight degree by his report, the Pontiff, after vainly endeavouring to rouse the Emperor to violent measures, consented to announce that he would assemble the council, during the following year, at Mantua.

This announcement was received by the Protestants with the same stern indifference as the promises of the late Pope. They could not safely attend a meeting held in the midst of their enemies, and in a situation where every hostile power would have the readiest means for securing, at any moment, their complete destruction. Affairs, therefore, remained in the same state. Paul looked eagerly around to see whether, by the exercise of his authority in other districts, he might recover somewhat of the lost influence of his See. England seemed to dare him to the attempt. Its sovereign had enfranchised himself, from motives little to his honour; but he had, at the same time, delivered his subjects from thralldom. Treaties and persuasions could not bring back the lost empire to allegiance. Paul determined, therefore, to employ the now almost mimic terrors of the Vatican to effect his purpose. England was pompously offered as a prize to the prince who should conquer it; and the people were freed from their allegiance, if they chose to rebel against their monarch for



giving them the blessings of religious liberty. The result of this absurd but ostentatious proceeding is well known; and Paul was compelled to acknowledge the futility of every attempt that wanted correspondence with the better spirit of the age.

A political reconciliation having been effected between Ferdinand and the other princes of the empire, Verger seemed to enjoy an improved opportunity for pressing the designs of his mission. He urged, with fresh earnestness, the arguments before used, to persuade the Protestants to accept the conditions of the Pontiff. But, as before, the mention of Mantua as the place of meeting produced an immediate feeling of disgust, and the legate contented himself with stating, that, whether the Protestants acceded to the terms of the Pontiff or not, the council would be forthwith convened.

It was during these efforts among the princes that Verger had an interview with Luther himself. The result of this meeting was as little satisfactory as any which had taken place between the nuncio and more powerful personages. Luther expressed himself freely respecting the conduct of the Pope, and scrupled not to declare that he believed the proposals for holding a council intended only to deceive.\* To this conclusion he was led by long experience. But the parties had in some measure changed positions. The Protestants saw less reason every day to desire the assembling of a council. It was becoming more and more evident that the Pope still possessed sufficient power to influence the decisions of any meeting which should be held out of Germany: that this influence had already been exerted so far, that the examination and decision of any questions to be proposed were anticipated; and that if they should now afford any colour to the notion that they might acknowledge the authority of such an assembly, they would, in fact, be annulling every privilege for which they had so earnestly contended. The Pope, on the other hand, seeing how sure he was of a majority in his favour, were the council held under his

\* Seckendorf, lib. III., sec. 34, p. 95.

own observation, eagerly seized at the advantage opened to his view.\* By holding a council, he would be satisfying the repeated demands of the Emperor, and seemingly those of the reformers themselves. While gaining thereby the highest praise for liberality and honesty, he would be placing his authority on a better basis than that on which it had stood for centuries; for the decisions of a council in its favour would renew every sanction that the most zealous supporters of the system regarded as its best support. If it be asked why Paul did not sooner call a council, if such were to be the consequences, the answer is obvious: it required the most cautious management, and a very favourable conjuncture of circumstances, to secure the successful working of the plan. Allowed to assemble before the control of the Pontiff was established as the directing principle, the Papacy itself might have fallen crushed under its weight. The fear, on the part of the Pope, that such a result was not impossible, meeting with numberless objections, on that of the Protestants, to any proposals not characterized by justice and candour, prevented, from year to year, the adjustment of the dispute.

The meeting held by the Protestants, in December 1535, at Smalcalde, confirmed them still more in the resolutions which they had lately adopted. Charles and the King of France were again in a state of hostility. Paul exerted his utmost influence to stop the progress of dissension between these professed children of the Church. He saw that the measures of the Emperor would never be such as he desired, while a powerful rival might be called in to assist the German reformers. But Charles became every day more convinced of their strength, and, in his address to the league, endeavoured to turn their complaints respecting the injustice of the courts back upon themselves. Attempts had been made, at the beginning of the year, to inspire the people with

\* The difference of opinion between Paul and his predecessor Clement VII. is acknowledged. "Clement declared it to be his opinion, that, in the state in which things were in his time, there was no need of a council."—Maimburg, sec. x.

the dread of a sudden invasion by the imperial troops. These insidious proceedings had their origin in the counsels of France, and it required the sacrifice of some anger and sternness on the side of Charles to overcome the impressions thus conveyed. Suspicion, in those days, was quickly followed by measures that shook thrones as well as mitres. The meeting at Smalcalde, therefore, saw signs of a more placable disposition in the address of the Emperor; but, knowing how little dependence was to be placed on assurances which had their root in expediency only, the princes resolved on taking every opportunity, as before, of strengthening their means of self-defence. In numbering their forces, it was now found that the troops which could be drawn out, at any moment, for their support, amounted to two thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry. Some important additions were also made to the confederacy, and every thing tended to convince the reformers that no apprehension need now be entertained of sudden violence.

It would have been well for the cause of true religion, had as much readiness to coalesce in the bonds of a spiritual charity been manifested, as was generally evinced when the ground-work of the union was political resistance. Already had melancholy proofs been given by the reformers, that wherever man is concerned, holiness, truth, and love breathe not their native air. Even in the little circle of which Luther was the centre, there were manifestations, at a very early period, of feelings that savoured of no evangelical spirit. These were not confined to the opponents of the great reformer himself; they sprang up like tares in the midst of a glorious harvest-field. His disputes with Carlostad indicated the bitterness of impatient pride, rather than the holiness of earnest zeal. The wrath which characterized his remarks on the bewildered but most unfortunate Anabaptists was, in the same way, that of the man, not of the saint or of the Christian reformer.

As these signs of the mingling of human passion with the purer and more exalted temper of faith were apparent in the first days of the Reformation, we need feel little surprise at their diminishing the brightness of



the prospect at a later period. The tenets of the Swiss reformers presented difficulties to the mind of Luther and his followers, which it might be almost impossible for them, in the state of mind in which they then were, to overcome. But Zuingli had taken the same principles as Luther for the foundation of his conduct. He appealed to Scripture as the sole authority on which he wished to act, as the sole fountain of the knowledge which he sought to impart. Not only Christian charity, therefore, but consistency, ought to have prevented those passionate strifes which so greatly injured the progress of the reformation.

The evils attending these dissensions would have been exhibited to a larger extent, but for the laudable exertions of the Landgrave of Hesse. At the Diet of Augsburg the two parties could with difficulty be kept from acting in open opposition to each other. As it was, they had to struggle singly and apart with the overwhelming force of the common enemy. The alliance into which the Landgrave entered with some of the Swiss cantons, assisted little towards the real blending of their several interests. He had no disposition but that of bold and ardent zeal to guide him in his actions; and the union was chiefly promoted from the feeling, that the arm of force ought to be employed in resisting the oppressive conduct of the Emperor and the Pope. Had a more spiritual motive, a clearer apprehension of the nature of the cause in which he was engaged, animated this champion of Protestantism, his example and influence would doubtlessly have effected far more than they did in lessening the schism between the two branches of the reformed Church. The attachment of the four populous and influential cities of Strasburg, Constance, Lindau and Memmingen, to the doctrines of the Sacramentarians, contributed in some degree to ward off the evils natural to such a division. By their consenting to sign the Confession of Augsburg, at Schweinfurt, in 1532, they placed themselves between the two parties; and some hope was entertained that, their example being followed by the Swiss reformers in general, concord might be permanently established.

To secure the fulfilment of this hope, was the great object of Martin Bucer, whose attainments and piety claimed the universal respect of his cotemporaries. By his advice, strengthened by the influence of the Landgrave of Hesse, and the moderate men of both parties, Melancthon being especially distinguished among the mildest and most tolerant, conferences took place, which, it was expected, would permanently settle the points in dispute.\* In 1529 the most celebrated theologians on either side met at Marburg, to examine the questions proposed by the controversy. The result, however, was so little satisfactory, that the Landgrave thought fit to dissolve the meeting, before it could manifest definitively its real sentiments and intentions. Subsequent efforts at conciliation were attended with similar results; and the progress of the Reformation, the advancement of the sublime cause involved in that progress, was retarded in no slight degree, at the present season, by this want of union between its otherwise faithful supporters. Of the real differences of opinion which led to these dissensions, we shall speak in another place. They are here alluded to, that the reader may rightly estimate the numerous and complicated difficulties which stood in the way of those who most earnestly desired the establishment of the Church of Christ.

Whatever might be the real intentions of Paul III. in his preparations for assembling a council, the delays which now took place cannot be ascribed to his seeking. The untimely war between the Emperor and the King of France threw, for a time, all things into doubt and confusion.† But, resolved on effecting so much of his plan as might give new vigour to the papal authority, Paul wisely proposed to begin the reformation of his own court. Had this notion entered the minds of his predecessors, or had it now been accompanied with any degree of spiritual minded-

\* The tenth article of the Confession is expressed in language which gave great liberty to those interpreters who were anxious to promote a union between the several parties. "De cœna Domini docent, quod cum pane et vino vere exhibeantur corpus et sanguis Christi vescentibus in cœna Domini." —Confessio Fidei, An. 1559.

† Sleidan, t. i., liv. VI., p. 267.

ness and sincerity, the change produced thereby in the condition of the Christian world would have been of incalculable extent.

The bull which authorized this examination of the state of Rome and its government, was issued in the month of September 1536; but, after sitting in debate till the middle of the following year, the commissioners appointed by the Pontiff resigned their office in ill-concealed disgust. Another party of cardinals and bishops was then appointed, but with equally bad success, unless we may regard their testimony to the corruptions which destroyed the energies of the Church of Rome at that time as one of the best vindications of the Protestant reformers.\*

By the renewal of the league of Smalcalde, and its increasing strength, the cause of the Reformation became daily of greater importance in the eyes of princes. Henry VIII. of England offered his assistance in carrying into execution its designs;† but the allies regarded him with suspicion, and better proved their consciousness of power by pausing before they accepted his help, than they would have furthered their cause by at once uniting with a monarch whose sincerity might be disputed. The example of Francis I. would have been sufficient to warn them against too readily admitting the great and powerful into their counsels. That prince, while offering himself as an ally to the German Protestants, was actually not only taking part in the most pompous displays of zeal for the Romish Church, but was giving up to the executioner pious professors of the gospel, because their holiness had offended the priests and theologians of Paris.‡ The Emperor himself manifested an inclination to treat the confederates with increased respect. There is reason to believe that this

\* Pallavicini attributes the inefficiency of this assembly to the advice of some of the members, who wished that the responsibility of all changes might rest on a more powerful body, one not less authoritative than a general council.—Hist. Concil. Trident., lib. IV., c. 5.

† Sleidan, t. i., liv. X., p. 443.

‡ Seckendorf observes on this fact: “*Neque enim primus esset Franciscus rex, qui aliud corde presserit, aliud ore effatus sit, vel qui sententiam mutaverit, et pro heresi habuerit quæ pura erat veritas, aut cleri importunitati et populi furori cesserit.*—Lib. III., sec. 38, p. 105.



feeling was mainly produced by the threatening aspect of the French war; but, in whatever it had its origin, it encouraged the Protestants to pursue the course which it was deemed expedient to adopt as a defence against the power of the Pope.\*

To every notice respecting the summoning of a general council, their answer had been, that they would take part in none which wanted any of the characters of a perfectly free and primitive assembly. The place of meeting was considered all-important to the securing of this object; and they now repeated, in stronger terms than ever, their determination to attend no council which held not its sittings in Germany. But though resolved not to expose themselves to the danger of a defeat, where to obtain a fair hearing appeared impossible, they saw plainly that consequences must result from the meeting of a council, whether they attended or not, which might prove of the greatest injury to the cause of religion, unless met by measures of great prudence and caution. The Elector of Saxony, therefore, gathered around him the best instructed of his associates and theologians, and directed them to consider carefully the course which ought to be pursued in the present juncture of affairs. It was evident that he viewed the proceedings of the Pontiff with the jealousy natural to a man whose mind and heart were occupied with the most reverential love of spiritual religion, and who dreaded every measure which had not its foundation in similar principles. The bull issued by the Pope was not sufficiently reserved in its expressions to prevent the real intentions of the Roman court from being understood by the reformers. While it made no mention of them by name, it spoke so strongly respecting the rooting out of heresies of every kind, and restoring peace to the Church by the destruction of schismatics, that they could scarcely fail to discover, in its most general expressions, the sentence prepared against

\* That the union could not be established without an apology on the part of the King, was very manifest. It was from this feeling that he sought so earnestly the assistance of Philip Melancthon, who would probably have acceded to the monarch's request, but for the war which broke out between Francis and the Emperor.—Camerarius, *Vita Melanc.*, p. 141–151.

of his divine right to obedience and homage, that the vast edifice of papal domination had been reared. To contradict this notion, to show from Scripture, as was done at the very time these articles were published, that, divinely or spiritually, the Pope had no more power than any other minister of God, was to sap the foundations of a structure for which no principle of voluntary, conventional, or ordinary ecclesiastical obedience could ever prove a sufficient support.

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### CHAP. III.

LUTHER'S SICKNESS—HIS VIEW OF PUBLIC PROCEEDINGS,  
AND OF THE PAPACY—STATE OF AFFAIRS—PROTESTANT  
MEETINGS—DEATH OF GEORGE OF SAXONY—HIS SUC-  
CESSOR.

THE slow progress of events at this period afforded many favourable opportunities to the actors therein to review their steps, and provide for the future. Divine Providence manifests its wisdom not less clearly in repressing the undue haste of its ministers, than it shews its resources in enabling them to complete the work when it is best that it should be ended. Had Luther and his associates been permitted to enlist the more powerful in their cause, or to subdue more rapidly the obstinacy of the world,—had the Almighty been pleased to effect his purposes without regard to intermediate effects and blessings, how much less abundant would have been the harvest of experience and wisdom reaped from the Reformation?—with how far inferior a degree of satisfaction should we have looked back upon the period when the change was effected which has given us light and liberty?

Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, and the other great and holy men engaged in the work, were led along the path of truth by such slow and steady steps, that not a trace of them is lost. If at any time they wandered from the track, tempted aside by human infirmity or

ignorance, we can tell to what extent they deviated; and their return to the guidance of the Spirit of light and holiness is as a signal to the mind for renewing its triumphant anticipations of the final victory of the Saviour.

The mind of Luther seemed to become more and more impressed with the infinite importance of the gospel, as he continued, from day to day, to preach its doctrines. It was this alone which could have kept him from falling into the snares which are ever prepared by the devil for the destruction of such men. The increase of spiritual zeal is not always accompanied with a proportionable humility of heart and sense of personal deficiency. There is hardly evidence enough to lead us to believe that such would have been the case with our great reformer. Had he taken his own wisdom as a guide,—had he simply yielded to the impulses of his inner being, however noble in their origin, however splendid the object proposed as their end, he would, before half his course was run, have degenerated into a proud and ambitious sectarist. But he had adopted the Word of God for his guide and rule. The movements of his mind were directed by its powerful counsels; the temptations of his heart to selfishness were checked by the vastness of its promises. In whatever he did, he could not escape from the responsibility which belonged to him as a minister of heavenly truth. To have regarded himself as a teacher sent from God would, but for the Bible, have ruined him as it has done others. It was as a teacher of Scripture, as one raised up to make known its doctrines, its value and authority, and in no other character whatever, that he effected, by the will of God, the mighty changes to which the Church owes its liberation.

It was not in the enjoyment of that vigour of frame, and buoyancy of spirits, which will sometimes carry a man forward by their own force, that Luther  
A.D. 1537. performed his work. He suffered greatly both from sickness and frequent depression of mind. At the meeting held at Smalcalde, to which we alluded in the last chapter, his disorders made so fearful an inroad on



his constitution, that little hope was entertained of his recovery. In the midst of his agony he exclaimed, "Lord God! behold I die! an enemy of thine enemy; the curse and the cursed of thine enemy, and the Antichrist of the Pope, in order that we may both be judged on that day;—he, indeed, thine enemy and Antichrist, to be punished with eternal shame and pain; but I, thy poor creature, who acknowledge openly thy name and majesty, to inherit eternal glory and dominion." On lamenting that his sickness had happened when he was so far from his family, the Elector comforted him with the assurance that none of those who were dear to him should suffer need. "Your wife," said he, "shall be my wife, and your children my children." His letter to Pomeranus breathed the tenderest spirit of affection. "Greet my Catherine," he says, "and tell her that she must bear my departure with patience. Let her remember how we have lived together in peace and happiness for twelve years. She has not only been to me a true and faithful wife, but has served me even as a hand-maid. God reward her in that day." In another passage he says, "I am ready to die, if such be the will of my Redeemer Jesus Christ; yet I would fain live till Whitsuntide, that I might strike still harder the Romish beasts, the Pope and his kingdom, in open conflict for the whole world."

In the first moment of comparative ease, Luther prepared to leave Smalcalde.\* He was induced to make the attempt, it is said, not simply from his desire to

\* The afflicting malady under which Luther suffered was relieved by the exertion made in his being removed. In his letter to Melancthon, written immediately on his recovering a little ease, he describes with painful accuracy the sufferings he had endured. He had a relapse in the course of the week, and it was some time before his health was firmly restored. "*Benedictus Deus et Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi, Pater misericordiarum et universæ consolationis, mi charissime Philippe, qui hac horâ secundâ noctis vestras misertus et preces et lacrimas, aperuit mihi venam et vesicam urinale improviso sane, quum surgerem ut nosti ad nitendum frustra. Vix quartale hujus horæ transiit, et fere octies egressa est urina, plusquam sextans singulis vicibus, ut jam plus quam cantharum plenum emisierim. Sic lætitia cogit etiam hanc aquam numerare aliis vilissimam mihi vero pretiosissimam.*"—*Briefe De Wette*, t. v., p. 57. It was at the close of this letter that he inserted the famous couplet:—

*Pestis eram vivus, moriens ero mors tua, Papa;  
Hospes, ab Hassiaqis, quantum potes, aufuge lectis.*

reach home, but to escape the presence of the Roman legate, wishing, as he expressed it, not to be left in the devil's lodgings. The pain which he suffered was at times so great, that he would exclaim, "O that even a Turk were here to slay me!" But, by God's blessing on the supplications of his anxious friends, and the care of the Elector, his malady was subdued, and the Protestants expressed themselves on the occasion as sons rejoicing in the restoration of a venerated father. Thanksgivings were publicly offered up by the clergy, and the Elector again addressed him with assurances of the most affectionate friendship.\*

The sickness of Luther had obliged him to intrust the affairs at Smalcalde to men, though not less earnest, yet, much inferior to himself in resolution and foresight. Of this he appears to have been fully sensible. On bidding them farewell, he is said to have exclaimed, "May God fill you with hatred to the Pope!" The sentiments of the Elector respecting any concessions to the Romish party were at least as adverse as those of Luther: "What," said he to the latter, in allusion to the proceedings of Melancthon, "what will they do when you and I are dead, Luther, if they venture to act thus while we are living?" So deeply was he impressed with the feeling that Melancthon had done wrong in the measures lately adopted, that he further observed, "I know how much the academy of Wittemberg owes to him; but far rather would I see the academy wholly deserted, than sacrifice a tittle of divine truth."

It was from no failure in his reverence or affection for Luther that Melancthon acted occasionally on lower grounds than those assumed by that undaunted enemy of Rome; he regarded his sickness with feelings of the deepest alarm, and hailed his recovery with proportionable joy. "Your tears and prayers, my dear Philip Melancthon, have helped me," said Luther in the letter quoted below, and which was written from the first resting-place on his journey. To this Melanc-

\* Luther owed nothing to the attentions of the physicians to whom he was committed. We have the testimony of Melancthon against them, who says, that "if he had had at first the wise and prudent physician who now attended him, he would not have fallen into such danger."—*Epist. ad Camerar., Lips.* 1669, p. 282.

thon replied, "From the bottom of my heart I thank God, the Father of mercies and Christ Jesus our Lord, and only High-priest and Mediator, that you are somewhat relieved, dear father, from your pain. I rejoice above measure, both on your own account and on that of the Christian Church, that you again live. Yea, my joy increases more and more, since I see, by this instance, that God will have pity upon our poor Church." In a letter to a friend, he says, "We all thank God that he has in some measure appeased the sufferings of Luther, and we pray that the God of all strength may restore him to strength and health; for we love him as our father, seeing that he has so well and powerfully watched over the flock of Christ; and we honour him as the chariot and horseman of Israel."\*

Luther had laboured during the interval of the meeting at Augsburg and the present time with a steadfastness of purpose and a clearness of views common only to such minds as his. The main, the general and all-engrossing, object of his existence and his toils, was the promotion of holiness and truth as presented to mankind in the gospel. But he had views subordinate, and, as he considered, auxiliary to the main and comprehensive designs of his spirit. These were, the destruction of the papal power, and the establishment of his views as to the Lord's Supper. Of the former he spoke with an intense resolution, with an hostility which, instead of losing its force by the lapse of time, gathered strength with every passing year. The opposition which he pursued against the papal power was manifested in a twofold respect: In the first place, he regarded the Pope as the grand supporter of the errors which had well nigh extinguished the light of the gospel, and, in the next, as the example of that union of the civil and ecclesiastical functions, obedience to which had produced such fearful consequences throughout the whole of Christendom.

It would scarcely have the appearance of justice, were the bad deeds of the Roman Church ascribed to

\* Pfizer, *Luthers Leben*, p. 822.



the Popes under any other circumstance than this, that the Popes have ever arrogated to themselves the whole power and entire direction of that Church. In reality, their vices and errors, their misdirected influence, their ambition and tyranny, formed but a part of the deep waters of corruption which at length overspread so large a portion of Christendom. Many of them found the machinery of evil so ready prepared for their hands, that they were tempted into its use beyond the personal force of corrupt inclination. Others surveyed from their elevation the dazzling prospect which tradition had created; and, contemplating only the triumphs of the Church over the world in that splendid but faithless mirror, the distinctions of the law, the inward principles of the gospel, the secret workings of the Spirit, vanished from the eyes of their understanding, and they devoted themselves solely to the enlargement of the scheme thus gorgeously traced out. Some there were who secretly lamented over the evils which they could not cure, and which they dare not openly acknowledge as part of the system they were appointed to administer; while the few who manifestly rose superior to the spirit of that system, had neither the time nor the strength and energies required for undertaking its reformation.

But Luther beheld in the person of the Pope the distinct and assailable enemy of evangelical simplicity. The Church of Rome, though corrupted by the innovations of dark times, was still sacred as a Church which sprung from an apostolic foundation. In the Papacy the human lineaments of pride and sensuality had overgrown those of apostolic truth and its legitimate authority. This began to be the case when the possessors of the Papacy first lost sight of their simple character as churchmen; they then wholly destroyed the theory of the Papacy itself, which, in reality, was no less stifled by the Popes, in their selfish and individual capacity, than was the Church by the growth of the Papacy. Luther was compelled to become a practical man. He had that comprehensiveness of intellect which enables those who enjoy it to form the

noblest and the soundest plans. Few men, in short, were ever better calculated to establish systems according to the conceptions of their own creative energies. The Reformation would have been a theory in Luther's conceptions, had he not been impelled into action before time was allowed him to form his plans on the mere basis of thought and foresight. Had he begun with theoretical views, he would doubtlessly have considered every step by which the Church of Rome had descended from the height on which the Spirit and Providence of God had placed it. He would have traced its declension from apostolic purity by the growing influence of pride in the clergy, and superstition in the world. The first attacks of his hardy genius would have been directed against the system and theory of Romanism: the solitude of the cloister would have tempered his zeal, so as to render it content with proving the truth of his opinions; and that the colossal power of the Church was in itself a usurpation, and in its consequences inimical to Christian holiness, would have been a conclusion out of which the reformers of later ages only would have drawn their reasons for a more practical warfare.

In the proceedings of the Roman court, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the several causes of corruption were gathered together in one narrow channel, and seemed to spring like a dark and furious stream from the base of the papal throne. Luther fixed his glance on the line thus marked out; the Popes proclaimed indulgences, and sold them for purposes of personal aggrandisement. The Popes resisted the examination of divine truth in its spiritual fountains; the Popes were the great examples of the vicious course of living which characterized the clergy at large; and the Popes had established, on their own personal responsibility, most of the rites and maxims which lay as the heaviest burden on the consciences of Christians seeking spiritual freedom in spiritual purification. Events occurred in quick succession which tended to fix the thoughts of all acute and inquiring minds on these potentates of the Roman Church. At length the daring

attempt of Leo. X. to convert godliness altogether into a source of gain brought inquiry to a single point. One great and solemn question thence arose—Shall a power thus flagrant in its abuses continue to be obeyed? And the answer being in the negative, he who had received from God the purest and the boldest spirit for the work began the attack upon its strongholds, and pursued his first rudely-sketched plan of warfare till it developed itself in a system, at every point of which the wise and pious of all ages and countries might make a stand against the despotism of Rome.

That Luther, in assailing the chiefs of the Roman Church, was guilty of much injustice, could not be fairly urged after the confession of Adrian VI.\* That Pontiff, not less infallible than any of his predecessors, openly declared that many horrible things had been perpetrated by the Popes; and that it was no wonder if the members were weak when the head was diseased, or that the prelates were infected with evil when the Popes were so. “We have all,” said he, “wandered from the right way; it therefore behoves us to humble ourselves.” The proceedings of Paul III. implied the same confession; and Luther, therefore, had ample reason for fixing his regards chiefly on the state of the Roman court. When he found that, notwithstanding the acknowledgments of many of its rulers, no change took place in its constitution or principles, it is no wonder that he poured forth reproofs corresponding in bitterness to the increasing conviction of his mind that the Popes would never reform themselves.

The efforts made at Augsburg to prevent the Emperor from listening to the arguments of the Protest-

\* *Scimus in hac sancta sede aliquot jam annis multa abominanda fecisse; abusus in spiritualibus, excessus in mandatis; et omnia denique in perversum mutata. Nec mirum si ægritudo a capite in membra, a summis pontificibus in alios inferiores prælatos, descenderit. Omnes nos declinavimus unusquisque in vias suas, nec fuit jamdiu qui faceret bonum, non fuit usque ad unum: quamobrem necesse est, ut omnes demus gloriam Deo, et humiliemus animas nostras ei: videat unusquisque nostrum unde ceciderit; et se potius quilibet judicet, quam a Deo in virga furoris sui judicari velit.*—Seckendorf, lib. I. sec. 143.

The inscription “*Liberatori Urbis Romanæ*,” with a wreath of flowers hung over his door, was the startling compliment paid to the physician who attended Adrian in his last moments.



ants were regarded as directly influenced by pontifical intrigue. "What else can we expect from Satan," exclaimed Luther; "what of good can be looked for from such a source?" But while he spared not the sharpness of reproof, nor refrained, at times, from hurling at Rome darts of polemic rage fierce as those of the Vatican itself, he carefully piled up argument upon argument, proof upon proof, to demonstrate the fallacy of the principles to which the Popes appealed in vindication of their claims. His little treatise *De Clavibus*, published in 1530, affords an excellent instance of the skill with which he could unite the utmost fervour of zeal with the coolness of logical discussion. After having shown how much violence had been done to the injunctions of our Lord by those who supported the pretensions of the Popes, he remarks, "They have used Christ's words, not to prove the efficacy of his blood, and of divine grace for the remission of sins, or for the just rebuke of the guilty, but to establish and magnify the power of the Pope, and give it authority over all Christians, emperors, kings and princes; over the dead in purgatory, and the angels in heaven; yea, they have done this with so much impudence, that they have made a god of the Pope, or, as they say, a sort of mixed being, a god and man together." Alluding then to the keys painted on the armorial bearings of the Pontiff, he says, "Let him for the future have these keys so painted, that the one which binds may fill the whole shield, and the other which looses be represented as small as possible in one corner; for this latter he never uses, except led thereto by rich and numerous bribes."

In his Treatise on Solitary Masses, published towards the end of 1533, he enters into the question of the nature of the Church, of the priesthood, and of the influence which it was in the power of the minister to exercise over the sacraments. Then referring to the Popes as the authors of the abuses which had so fearfully corrupted the Church, he says, "But we do not own the Papacy for the Church, neither as any part thereof; we regard it as a corruption and desolation, as

Antichrist, who wars against the Church, the word and order of God, and exalts himself above them as the god of gods, according to the prophecy of Daniel and Paul. But since we and the Holy Church cannot in body separate ourselves from that antichristian corruption or Antichrist, seeing that he will continue to have his seat, not without but within the Church, and in the holy place, as our Lord teaches, to the end of time, let us, notwithstanding, separate ourselves spiritually, and in a right sense; let us avoid his corruptions, and, establishing our hearts in the true faith, remain pure from his iniquity."

The Commentary on Isaiah, about which he was engaged the following year, affords further proof of the strength which these sentiments gathered from his increasing means of knowledge and observation. "Because," says he, "the Papists occupy the office and have the administration of the sacraments, they represent themselves to be the Church. This is their strongest argument against us." "Do you think," they say, "that you, few in number as you are, can be the Church, and not be great, numerous, and powerful as we are?" Our answer is simply that of St. Paul to the Jews :\* "However many or great you may be, if you believe not Christ, and trust not to the righteousness of Christ, it matters nothing; you are not the Church, merely because you are in the office of the Church. The Church is proved by faith in Christ, and not by the possession of office, or by multitudes." Again, "The Romans, after having put to death a countless number of martyrs, supposed that they had overturned the kingdom of Christ. But what was this but a vain dream? For do we not see that Christ and Christians still remain, while the Roman empire itself has perished? These things are to be applied to the Pope, and in all other trials. All the teeth of Satan, all the fury and all the efforts of the Papists, are before God as a dream, which not only profit them nothing, but are made to them an occasion of ridicule." In the comment on these words of the prophet,† "He was

\* Rom. ix. 28; Isa. xxviii. 22, 23.

† Isa. liii. 5.

wounded for our transgressions," he says, "We have overthrown the Papacy among us by this one article. For if Christ was wounded for our iniquities, the Pope is surely Antichrist, seeing that he wishes us to expiate our offences by other satisfactions." The Epistle to the Galatians, a work which he undertook when his mind had enjoyed every opportunity that could be expected for the maturing of thought and holy feeling, abounds in allusions, direct or indirect, to the same subject. "We have offered to the Papists," says he, "all that may be offered, nay, more than we ought to offer; for we have excepted nothing but liberty of conscience. We are unwilling to be compelled, or to bind our consciences, to any work, by the performance of which it is proclaimed we may be justified, or the neglect of which is to declare us condemned. Freely will we consent to eat that which they deem it lawful to eat; to keep the same feasts and the same fasts; only let them permit us to observe all these things with a free will. Let them cease from those threatening words with which they have hitherto terrified the world, and endeavoured to hold it in subjection. But they will not give us this liberty. We must, therefore, be rebellious and pertinacious; otherwise we should lose the truth of the gospel; we should lose our liberty, which we have, not in Cæsar, not in kings or princes, not in the Pope, in the world, in flesh or blood, or reason, but in Christ Jesus."

In his conversation with Verger, the Pope's nuncio, Luther spoke not less boldly than he wrote. "Let him come to Wittemberg;" said he, "we shall receive him willingly. Let him hold the council where he will; I dare venture my neck to be present." Alluding to himself, he remarked that, "though still but an unprofitable servant, he spared no labour in the ministry of the divine word; that he could not discover any greater affinity between the household of Christ and the Roman Pontiff than between light and darkness; that nothing had ever proved more useful to him than the rigour of Leo and the sharpness of Cajetan, which he ascribed not to themselves, but to Divine Providence;



for that when the gospel had not yet shone with its full light upon his soul, and he had only been able to discover some abuses in the matter of indulgences, his adversaries might easily have succeeded in silencing him, had they been willing to submit to the same rule.”\*

It was thus that Luther pursued, from year to year, the great contest in which he had engaged with the heads of the Roman Church. To prove that their power was usurped, and that to yield to an authority which set itself above Scripture would be ruinous to every hope of the Gospel, was the point at which Luther aimed whenever he wrote for the world, or in defence of his proceedings. But a mind like his can rarely be kept within the narrow line of controversy. He was happily influenced by motives sufficiently powerful to raise him above the atmosphere in which the passions of the man or the polemic would have been contented to display their strength. The arguments, or bold declamatory passages, with which he assailed the Roman Pontiff, are found in the midst of treatises on subjects the most important to the universal Church of Christ.

This, also, is the case in respect to the other great branch of Luther's controversy. The solemnities of the mass had been for ages the medium of conveying the deepest religious impressions; a holy reverence for the bread of life, and love to Him by whose sufferings it was given, taught every heart that could cherish these sentiments to approach the altar, as the gate both to the cross and to the throne of Christ. Advantage was taken of these feelings to construct a system of ceremonial worship which might increase the external dignity of the Church. The views of the clergy, and the zeal of a people not accustomed to examine doctrines

† Paulo Sarpi, *Hist. de Concile de Trente*, Courager, t. i., liv. I., p. 141. Pallavicino speaks of Paulo Sarpi's account of this colloquy with supreme contempt: “Hoc inter licentiam ac Lutherum colloquium pluribus sane mendaciis pervertitur a Suavi, quam Trojæ bellum ab Homero, cum illud depingat velut indecorum Pontifici, quasi ejus jussu quæsitum, et a nuntio assentationibus promissisque viliter affusis, et imprudentiâ sensique parum religiosus deturpatum: in altera verò parte gloriosum Martino, sententiarum pietate, responsum sapientiâ, magnanimitate repulsarum.”—*Hist. Con. Trident.*, lib. III., c. 18, p. 124.

or practices by the clear light of Scripture, favoured this object. It was seen that the few only were influenced by motives purely spiritual; and it was the obedience of the many that was sought, partly from political, but partly also from strictly benevolent and properly ecclesiastical motives. In the progress of those forms which converted the Lord's table into an altar more gorgeous than those of the temple, the doctrine of the real presence brought down the Lamb of God to be a sacrifice, visible and palpable, every day before the people, and rendered the multiplication of ceremonies, and the increase of their pomp and magnificence, essential to consistency.

It was scarcely possible that men should return to the careful examination of Scripture for the grounds of belief and practice, and not discover the baselessness of the system thus established. The mere calling of the mind from the contemplation of symbols to the consideration of truths, is a signal for the greatest of all possible revolutions. Luther himself became unexpectedly conscious of this important fact. Bold as he was, he dare not pursue, at first, the far-extending consequences of his maxims. The Bible lay open before him; but he wisely determined, that while he owned its authority as supreme, that acknowledgment ought only to avail him so far as he was become acquainted with the minutest intimations of the Holy Spirit: he contented himself, therefore, with a slow and cautious progress. A principle had been established which could not but lead to good, if rightly pursued; but which might, if perverted and wrongly applied, foster presumption, and give birth to a host of dark and deadly errors.

That he stopped short in the pursuit of truth from any lessening of zeal or want of honesty, would be a supposition contradicting every circumstance of his life. It is clear, on the other hand, that many who had neither his genius nor his power, but who were engaged like himself in the cultivation of evangelical religion, did, according at least to our apprehension, proceed further in the development of some important points. His

views on the subject of the Lord's Supper, of the substantiality of the elements, were defended by so steady an appeal to Scripture, that he plainly desired to try them by the test to which he desired all other opinions to be submitted. But some of his more immediate associates, and the whole party which followed the great reformer of Switzerland, while they took the same view of the authority of Scripture language, threw aside all the glosses which multiplied mysteries at the expense of its simple spirituality. The doctrine of the real presence, considered in the most absolute sense of the term, was greatly modified by Luther himself; he acknowledged that the bread and wine retained their proper nature, though, by a mystical union, comprehending, after consecration, the body and the blood of Christ. In this opinion he found himself early opposed; and the contest which thence arose was replete with circumstances the most painful of any that occurred in the progress of the Reformation.

The first opponent who presented himself was his former associate Carlostadt, a man whose piety would never have been doubted by any party, perhaps, had his discretion been equal to his sincerity and his attainments. This unfortunate polemic easily discerned that his leader in the work of reformation had adopted a view which, however supported by the literal interpretation of Scripture, seemed to contradict the general spirit of the Divine Word. He had formerly been a devoted disciple of Thomas Aquinas, and in his subtle definitions and distinctions could easily have found a defence for the most difficult of the propositions either in the old or the new creed. But with his allegiance to the Pope he had thrown aside all reverence for the fathers of scholasticism. Unable to support himself by argument or influence against Luther, who dreaded his enthusiasm and hated his opinions, he soon became lost in the crowd of disputants who were better fitted to continue the controversy. Wolfgang Fabricius Capito and Martin Bucer were both of them men of calm minds, earnest, enlightened and devout; they trembled at the consequences to be looked for from these dis-



putes; and their time, learning, and influence were devoted to the effort which seemed necessary to establish peace.

But much as the controversy on the subject of the sacrament was to be feared, as weakening the present force of the Protestants, it produced effects which tended to enlarge the views and strengthen the convictions of many sincere friends of divine truth. In those cases in which the question immediately in dispute remained where it was, subjects of collateral but not less important interest became better understood. The glory of the Redeemer, the inestimable value of his sufferings, the power and efficacy of a justifying faith, those grand supports of Christian holiness, shed a softening and benignant light over a large portion of the pages devoted to this controversy.

It would be a curious and not unprofitable inquiry to trace in the writings of true, earnest, and spiritual polemics the strong thoughts and illustrations of divine truth, which may be attributed to the originating influence of an active and intense zeal. The subject is not one which the historian can handle; but in the disputes of the different sections of the early evangelical Church there exist many proofs that Luther, Capito, Bucer, Œcolampadius, and other men of the same class, brought forth in their defence vast stores of well-digested theology and experience, which would otherwise have been left unemployed, or unexhibited to the world.

At the period of which we have now to speak, the full tide of opinion, strengthened and enlarged by many means of grace, and the attendant helps of learning, was running rapidly in the direction of Protestantism; but it is plain, that whatever force it possessed, that force had its origin in the truth and spirituality of the reformed doctrines. The haughty and sensual king of England might break the baton of superstition over the grave of Popery; the adventurous monarch of France might speak of reformation, when it was his interest to oppose the Emperor; the sincere and pious Elector of Saxony and his associate princes, might joyfully bring their sceptres or their swords to

defend the preacher while he poured forth the treasures of divine knowledge ; but while it was the publication of truth which began the movement, so was it its continued publication, and the enlarging of its communications, which alone kept up the spirits of the first converts, and brought them from day to day new and energetic allies.

The preparations for a council had been somewhat unexpectedly suspended by the caution or timidity of the Duke of Mantua. Not unwisely concluding that an assembly like that proposed might greatly endanger the safety of his people, he required a grant of money and supplies for the maintenance of a body of troops during the sitting of the council in his capital.\* As the Pope could not, for many reasons, assent to this, he next named Vicenza, in which city it was proposed to summon the assembly during the summer of the approaching year. The war which still employed the forces of Francis I. and the Emperor, almost within sight of the Pontiff, presented a difficulty not to be so easily surmounted. Cardinal Pole was employed to negotiate a peace between these princes, but without success ; the King of France consequently urged that it would be unwise to attempt the holding of a council at such a time, and endeavoured to throw the whole responsibility attending the inter-

\* It was urged by the Pontiff, and seemingly with much reason, that as it was probable no other potentate but himself would be present at the council, and that the members of the assembly would be either ecclesiastics or lawyers and senators, there could be little cause of fear. There had been no armed force to protect the places in which former councils were held. That of Constance was particularly alluded to, as in that celebrated assembly Popes had been dethroned and created, and the authors of heresies doomed to the flames ; but, notwithstanding these and other causes of excitement, no necessity was found for the use of military. To all these arguments the Duke replied in the language which might be looked for from a man who really desired to preserve his people from a series of excessive personal annoyances. But his conduct was regarded as greatly wanting in proper zeal for the honour of the Church. There is, however, some reason to suspect that the Duke, when he first listened to the proposals of the Pope, entertained the notion that he might gain credit without encountering any inconvenience, there being little prospect that the council would ever be held. The reason, so far as he himself was concerned, for refusing the Pope's demand, was most probably a fear that the jurisdiction of the Pontiff might interfere materially with his own.—Pallavicino, lib. IV., c. 3, p. 133. Paulo Sarpi, lib. I., c. 56, p. 150.

ruption of the Pontiff's plans on the shoulders of his adversary. Ferdinand, on the other hand, accused the Pontiff of favouring the pretensions of Francis, to the general injury of the Christian cause, and strongly urged him to use his authority with that prince to establish peace on just and reasonable terms.

It cannot be denied that the situation of the Pope at this period was fraught with difficulty; and it would be unjust to conceal that he appears to have laboured assiduously to bring about that state of things in which there would be, at least, less obvious cause for the world's accusations against Rome. The language of the catholic historians is supported by what is known of the simple facts of the case.\* The most powerful princes were at war with each other; almost every state of Europe was agitated with religious dissensions; an open acknowledgment had been made of corruption in the Church itself; and it was manifest to the experienced eye of Paul III. that he could effect nothing till tranquillity was in some measure restored. Francis had gained great advantage over the Emperor in Belgium, and the corresponding successes of the Turks reduced Charles and the King of the Romans to desire peace, as almost essential to the safety of their dominions.

Tranquillity being at length partially obtained,† Paul once more issued his mandate respecting the council. It was in the interval which occurred between this proclamation and the time proposed for the meeting of the assembly, that the dignitaries employed in considering the state of the Church brought their report to the Pontiff. The nature of that report has been already alluded to. It taught a lesson which had never yet been breathed into the ears of the Pope of Rome. Whatever might be the secret feelings of Paul on the subject, he must have been a man of wholly different character to be able to adopt honestly and effectively the rules laid down. But the difficulties which, it was plain, must attend any attempt at internal re-

\* *Reverà Pontifex, in Catholicis pacificandis, hereticisque reconciliandis, strenuè desudabat.*—Pallavic.

† The truce between Francis and the Emperor was signed 18th June 1538.



form, contributed to increase the desire of the Pope to assemble a council. He found himself involved in perplexities from which, however proudly he might speak, his own power could not deliver him. Like any other arbitrary potentate, he was only nominally free from the domination of his court. But to humble ambitious prelates or factious priests, to assert his rights and act upon them, was not to be effected without a plan and well-considered operations. A council which should be sufficiently numerous to have the appearance of freedom, and yet be actually under the influence of his ministers, was the only medium by which such objects could now be attained.

While Paul III. was thus anxiously weighing the various means presented for defending his Church, affairs in Germany indicated a growing hostility between the two parties in that country. Vice-chancellor Held had been present at the meeting of the Protestants at Smalcalde; and, having witnessed the renewal of their league, resolved to awaken, if possible, the catholic princes to the necessity of forming a similar union. He found no unwilling listeners to this proposal. In the month of June 1538, a solemn league was entered into by the Catholics assembled at Nurenberg, for eleven years. This union was dignified by the title of the Holy League, as established for the purpose of defending the religion of the Church. At the head of the body appeared the names of the Emperor and the King of the Romans; but so little good was expected to result from this combination, that Held, by whose advice it was formed, had to bear the blame of greatly overstepping the proper limits of his office. The further consideration of the subject, however, tended to justify his measures. Charles allowed the league to continue; and though it was professedly instituted only as a defence against the encroachments of the Protestants, it presented an aspect of absolute hostility, when viewed in relation to time, place, and circumstance.

Patriotism and humanity had partisans among those who could not, or would not, enter into the disputes respecting religion. To these the present state of affairs

exhibited the most alarming signs of approaching confusion. They saw, in the confederacies lately formed, the elements of a civil war, in which religion, domestic peace and liberty might all be sacrificed to the pride of the conquering party, whichever it should be. Among those who viewed the passing events in this manner, was the Elector of Brandenburg, Joachim II., a man of moderate temper and great good sense. Without joining the league of Smalcalde, he adopted the principles of the Reformation, and obtained by his prudence the confidence of many of the best men of both parties. As he was once very strongly opposed to the Protestants, and when he acknowledged the truth of their doctrines, professed them without any violation of brotherly feeling towards his former associates, he may fairly be regarded as enjoying no ordinary degree of self-control. King Ferdinand gladly availed himself of the services of this prince at the present juncture. The Emperor, though suspicious of every thing which might favour the Protestants, found himself obliged to listen to the representations of his brother, threatened with a new attack on the side of the Turks. "Yield," was the purport of his advice, "as far as is absolutely necessary, but no farther. Bring back the heretics, if possible, to the orthodox belief; if you cannot do this, at all events allow them nothing which can be offensive thereto, or to other Christians."\*

Such sentiments were not likely to promote the interests of either party. A pretended peace, nourishing as it does the seeds of enmity, is often more dangerous than open strife, which may soon either exhaust the poison, or convince the opponents of mutual error. But in the month of February 1539 a meeting of the chiefs of the two parties was held at Frankfort. Melancthon, Bucer, and other distinguished theologians were present; and after each party had referred to the broken pacification of Nuremberg, new demands were made on each side for fresh and more powerful securities. The Protestants, on their part, insisted on a

\* Pallavacino, lib. IV., c. 8, p. 6. This author relates the above on the authority of a private letter from the papal ministers to Cardinal Farnese.

complete immunity from the pains and penalties which had hitherto been inflicted on them by the judgment of the courts, and the individual tyranny of catholic princes. They desired that the marriages of their clergy might not be regarded as unlawful, and that the offspring of those marriages should be allowed to inherit the estates of their parents; that Protestants in catholic states might be permitted to depart, and take up their abode in reformed districts; and that no one should suffer loss of life, property, or liberty, on account of his religion.

The Catholics, on the other hand, complained bitterly of the means which had been employed by the Protestants to make converts; of the confiscation of the property belonging to ecclesiastics and religious institutions; and of the oppression, even, which the adherents to the antient faith had suffered at the hands of the reformers. Such plain and direct accusations, passed from the one side to the other, admitted of no immediate answer. The statement of doctrine was attended with still further difficulty; and the utmost which could be done was to agree to a truce for fifteen months, during which time a select number of pious and learned men might be employed in arranging measures for a more lasting pacification.\*

It was the justifiable policy of the Protestants to desire to renew the treaty of Nurenberg for at least ten years, during which period their views as a religious body might gain greater strength and consistency. But so far were they from obtaining this object, that the short period named in the agreement at Frankfort was characterized by the same signs of uncertainty, and the same ill-concealed spirit of hostility, as those which marked

\* The treaty stated that if terms of agreement were not settled in the fifteen months allowed, it should notwithstanding remain in force till a Diet of the empire should assemble; that, while it continued, no procedure should be carried on against the Protestants; that they should be admitted to plead without distinction in courts of justice; and that no new ally should be received on either side; that on the 1st of August persons who were lovers of peace should assemble at Nurenberg and choose theologians, who might confer tranquilly and amicably on the points in dispute; that the Emperor and King Ferdinand would send their commissaries to the colloquy; and that whatever was thus settled should receive their approbation, and remain firm and stedfast.—*Sleidan*, t. ii., liv. XII., p. 69.



the preceding period of their struggle. The Emperor, occupied with affairs at home, seemed to wish for nothing but the silence of both parties in Germany, till he had answered the calls on his more immediate attention. While this unsatisfactory state of things prevailed in respect to the treaty, events occurred which led the Protestants to hope for an improvement in their position, notwithstanding the machinations of the opposite party. George of Saxony died at the close of the meeting at Frankfort, and the Roman Catholics were thereby deprived of one of their most prudent and energetic leaders. He had acted towards the Protestants with a persevering hostility, distinguished, however, not more by its rancour than by the earnestness and honesty of spirit which marked the general features of this prince's character. Luther could contemplate things but under one aspect; his heart was wholly given up to the grand design with which he began his career as a minister of God. He sought but one object—the free and full diffusion of heavenly truth; and rightly esteeming that only as holy, or worthy of love and veneration, or even of tolerance, which harmonized with this divine principle, he allowed himself to forget the law of charity, which discriminates in the acutest manner between the errors which pursue and overcome, and the errors which are pursued and then cherished, in order that the conscience may have something to blind or harden it. That George was not voluntarily blind, in the worst meaning of the phrase, to the blessings offered by the Reformation, appears from the fact, that he acknowledged the necessity of many changes, none of which could have been effected by the concurrence of wicked or sensual men.\* His persecutions, begun and carried on like every other series of oppressive actions, justly excited the indignation of virtuous minds; but not a single man possessed of power or influence had as yet arrived at the proper notion of religious liberty, or

\* Conferences were held, by his express permission, respecting a reform of abuses in the Church. One of these took place at Leipsig a year before his death; and it was there openly contended by his minister George von Carlowitz that the Church would never reform itself, but must be reformed by the secular power.—Seckendorf, lib. III., sec. 71, ad. 1.

liberty of conscience. None yet believed that the only weapons which ought to be employed against error were persuasion and sound argument; and it is a truth which must be acknowledged, though deplored, that those who exclaimed most against persecution when it fell upon themselves, were frequently persecutors whenever they could exercise power over those who dissented from their views. George of Saxony, therefore, was not worthy of reprobation simply because he employed his authority against the reformers, unless we would include in that condemnation some who best deserve our veneration and affection.

But whatever view we take of the character of this early enemy of Protestantism, or of the stern and passionate censures passed on him by Luther, his death, it is certain, gave the reformers a much better hope of success in the states of Saxony.\* The Duke had looked forward to seeing in his successor as firm a champion of the Roman Church as himself. But premature decay had deprived him of his children;† and his brother Henry, who had been admitted a member of the Protestant League in 1537, was known to be anxiously engaged in promoting the views of the reformers. George, however, either gave less credit to the reports made to him respecting the opinions of his brother, or thought less of the firmness of that prince than it deserved; for, by a testament, which the nobility confirmed at his desire, he declared Henry and his two sons his successors, on condition that they should preserve the catholic faith—that is, make no change in the religion of the state. Should they violate this condition, the territory was to be given over to the Emperor or King Ferdinand, and remain under their control till some successor might be found, whose orthodoxy should render him worthy of the trust.

However justifiable this conduct might be on the part of a prince like George of Saxony, it savoured little of

\* Maimburg says, “*Maximam vero et ferociam et potentiam Protestantibus addidit mors Georgii ducis Saxonie, magni fidei Catholicæ protectoris.*”—Sec. 19.

† The elder son, prince John, died in January 1537; the other, Frederic, who still survived, was of so imbecile a mind, that he was legally declared to be incapable of reigning.—Seckendorf, lib. III., sec. 71.

wise or prudent policy. The result proved equally prejudicial to the interests of religion and the peace of his subjects. In the reply of Henry to the deputation which addressed him shortly before his brother's death, the courtiers of Duke George might have read a prophecy of future troubles. That he would not sacrifice his religion for a diadem, was the announcement which they were to take back to the expiring duke; but Prince Henry did not say that he would sacrifice the diadem because he kept his religion. The deputies, therefore, were no sooner departed than he prepared for the struggle which might be necessary to secure his succession. Duke George died before his messengers returned. Henry immediately hastened to Dresden, and, taking advantage of all the support afforded him by the league of Smalcalde, obtained from the nobility and the people a ready acknowledgment of his rights.\*

The first thing which the new duke did, was to invite Luther to Dresden, where, soon after, and at Leipsig, he preached with an energy which well prepared the people for the changes about to take place. That they had not been strangers to the doctrines of the Reformation, was fully proved by the conduct of many of the clergy. Above three hundred benefices had been vacated, and several of the convents and monasteries were left with scarce half the complement of inhabitants. But it was not by gradual reforms, by mere appeals to reason and the gospel, that Henry could satisfy his conscience. He conceived it to be his duty to determine by authority, and at one moment, the numerous questions now agitated in his states. To this measure he was also further urged by the advice of the Elector of Saxony. At Whitsuntide, therefore, in the month of May 1539, the two princes, each accompanied by several theologians, met at Leipsig. Luther preached on the occasion, and the Duke proclaimed his intention to make a fundamental change in every thing which regarded the discipline of the Church, or the disposition of its revenues. But it was not by decrees or proclamations

\* Sleidan, t. ii., liv. XII., p. 75.



that the Reformation was begun ; and however we may rejoice in its triumphs, gained by the proper arms of spiritual warfare, it is only with a feeling of regret that we can contemplate changes produced, though in the cause we adopt, by violent and arbitrary enactments. There appears, moreover, especial reason for disliking the proceedings of Duke Henry. The people over whom he was placed had already evinced signs of a willingness to inquire, to listen, and to be convinced. He was now possessed of power to protect those who were anxious to make an open declaration of their faith. Means were at hand for the instruction of others who had not yet manifested any such inclination ; and while he exercised his authority in reference to both these objects, throwing the whole weight of his example into the scale of Protestantism, he might safely have left it to make way among the people by the proper influences of divine truth. “In one day, in one assembly,” says the catholic historian, “he changed the state of religion, and made the whole city of Leipsig Lutheran, which had always before been catholic ; whence we may easily see how weak a foundation for their faith those miserable nations must have, being thus ever prepared to alter their opinions, and embrace a religion, not as it may please God, but as it may be agreeable to their princes.”\*

Had the proclamation been deferred till a later period, this accusation could not have been made. The people, instructed carefully in the doctrines of revealed truth, would have gradually adopted the simple worship practised in the churches of the Lutherans ; and the bitter feelings which soon after led to so many evils in this part of Germany might never have existed. But scarcely had the duke issued his orders, when the magistrates of the city indicated their unwillingness to assent to so sudden and general a change. “Let us, at least,” said they, “enjoy the same liberty of following openly the religion of the Roman Church, as the Protestants are to enjoy in respect to the doctrines of Luther. Let us

\* Mainburg, sec. 19.

not be prohibited from receiving the communion according to the former practice, because the Lutherans are allowed the privilege of coming to the altar with new views of the Sacrament."

A still stronger resistance was offered by the university, which might reasonably regard the proclamation of the duke as no slight infringement of the privileges usually accorded to so learned a body. The powerful influence or authority of the Prince prevailed so far, that the murmurs thus excited were by degrees almost suppressed. But a spirit of disaffection was engendered, and Lutheranism became to many as redolent of fearful apprehensions as a rampant priesthood in the worst days of Romanism to those who desired reform.

But while Henry adopted one measure which might have been more prudently kept back, he employed others which had in them all the principles of sound good sense and piety. Learning being greatly depressed in the university, he appointed new professors, and made alterations, which, followed in a spirit of piety, could scarcely fail to aid the cause of truth and holiness.\* Having effected much in respect to the higher branches of education, he turned his attention to the general state of the schools throughout his dominions. In adopting these plans of improvement, he only acted according to the genuine principles of Protestantism, the foundation of which, apart from temporary or sectarian views, was an earnest and catholic desire to bestow as much light on every heart as every heart could receive. A still more important proceeding followed these undertakings. The state of religion was little understood. It is too generally the case, that in a church long established, and possessing more than sufficient means to satisfy the ambition of the clergy, it is taken for granted that all things are right. This leads either to the neglect of visitation, or to such a mere formal exercise of the superintendence of the minister, that the people are, in

\* Melancthon had a large share in carrying into effect these designs of the prince. He happened at the time to be suffering great domestic affliction from the loss of friends. These united toils and sorrows brought on the illness to be mentioned hereafter.—Camerarius, Vita, p. 181.

reality, left to themselves, to their own humours; while the clergy, on their part, adopt whatever opinions or conduct they please, if they preach no open heresy or unprofitable schism.

The accession of Maurice, who succeeded Duke Henry in 1541, tended at first to quicken the progress of the reformed doctrines in this part of Saxony. To the zeal of his father he added the energies of early life; and if the Protestants rejoiced at the elevation of the former, they saw far greater cause of triumph in the accession of a prince who possessed so many qualities which promised fidelity to their party.

We have seen how little gratification the reformers expressed at the proffer of assistance from the Kings of England and France. Their coldness was the result of prudent counsels: they saw that to admit a foreign ally into their association might lead to some compromise of the loyalty and patriotism which it was their equally wise and pious resolution to preserve. But feelings of triumph only attended the coming in of new allies from the different states of the empire. Here no hostility was threatened, but only an increase of the moral power which even subjects may exercise without a violation of the strictest loyalty. The accession of Maurice, therefore, produced lively emotions of thankfulness in the mind of the Elector of Saxony. Still greater pleasure was evinced when intelligence spread through the country that Joachim the Elector of Brandenburg, and so long the mediator between the two parties, had openly proclaimed himself a convert to the doctrines of Protestantism. This prince passed several years in the careful examination of the subjects connected with the Reformation. His feelings as a Christian would not allow him to remain indifferent to the religious part of the question; his position as a prince obliged him to consider its political bearings with the utmost patience and circumspection. The conclusion to his inquiries was of vast importance to the Protestants. It did not simply add to their power; it confirmed the verity of their assertions, and the justness of their theory. There was no force employed in the change which fol-



lowed the acknowledged conversion of the Prince. A gradual reformation of the views of the people had preceded his own. One of the most valuable and interesting facts in the history of this period was furnished by the conduct of the Bishop of Brandenburg. As early as the year 1528, this right-minded prelate had allowed the gospel to be preached in the city by one of the reformed pastors. That he did not admit of this from any sudden effect of protestant zeal appears from the fact, that nearly eight years passed away before he permitted the communion to be administered in both kinds, acknowledged the right of the clergy to marry, or corrected the abuses which had sprung up during the long misrule of the dominant church. But the caution thus exhibited did not lessen the subsequent proof of zeal. On the 1st of November 1539, Joachim partook, for the first time, of the communion in both kinds. The venerable prelate administered the rite to the Prince, at Spandau, and the example of the sovereign was followed by a numerous train of courtiers and attendants.

It was from events of this nature, and not from any real possession of military power, that the Protestants continued to advance their cause. In the deep-seated affections of their adherents; in the increase of knowledge and piety; working not by sudden bursts of ardour, but subduing men's minds to the influence of truth; in this the Reformation had its actual growth. The few thousands of men whom they might be able to equip and bring into the field would have made, at any time, a vigorous stand for the moment; but, as was afterwards seen, the power of the Emperor and his allies, roused to a steady and continued effort, could not be resisted without ruinous consequences. In a struggle of this kind, discomfiture was almost sure to attend the best efforts of the League. It was of a nature foreign to the proper spirit of the cause. In so far as the members of the protestant body found themselves obliged to adopt arguments of necessity or expediency, they lost, what was invaluable to them, confidence in the sufficiency of divine help, or in the consolations which the

Holy Spirit would afford, should they be reduced to a state of suffering.

The feelings of the two classes of reformers were widely opposite in this respect. On the side of the Landgrave of Hesse stood marshalled the numerous adherents to the cause, who, desirous of religious liberty and knowledge, were not less interested in the struggle itself than in the prospect of the good to be sought. The guides of the other party were Luther, Melancthon, and some few others, who acknowledged that what was begun in the spirit ought not to be ended in the flesh. As no decided step could be taken by either side while the views of the Emperor remained so uncertain, this difference of sentiment produced but little discussion. At present it was generally understood that the reformers were almost wholly at his mercy. The truce had scarcely received his sanction. Every day was pregnant with omens of approaching peril; and while some amused themselves with preparations for hostility, and others looked on in timid apprehension and uncertainty, the only real supporters of the cause, and the only really tranquil, were the few who continued to treasure up in their hearts the teachings of God's Word, and to strive with more and more earnestness for His help, as they saw the day approaching.

## CHAP. IV.

STATE OF PARTIES—CONDUCT OF THE EMPEROR—REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PROTESTANTS—MEETING OF DIET AT SPIRE—CONFERENCE AT HAGUENAU—ITS RESULTS.

WHILE the Protestants suffered no small anxiety from the position in which they were placed, neither the Emperor nor the Pope gained any advantage from the policy which had been adopted by their respective courts. The latter could not act without the consent of the former, and he saw himself bound hand and foot by the continued progress of the Turks. If a Roman Catholic witness is to be believed, the difficulties which thus stood in the way of these potentates were to be overcome by expedients which savoured of the worst spirit of the most petty courts. Pallavicino has given at full length the document on which this opinion is founded. According to the reasoning of the Emperor, peace with the Protestants was only expedient so long as his forces were separated by the difficulties of his present position. "Let tranquillity be restored," was the purport of his remarks; "we will then throw off the temporary disguise, and compel the malcontents to recognise again both the power of the state and the power of the Roman court."

On the arrival of Charles in Flanders, the deputies of the Protestants appeared before him with an address which contained a long and earnest recital of the grievances which they already suffered, and of the evils which they anticipated, should not the present course of affairs be greatly modified.\* Whether the tone of this address was manifestly too free to leave things in their former equilibrium, or that they feared the friendship which the Emperor had lately formed with the King of France might precipitate the designs against them, an address was sent to

\* Sleidan, t. ii., liv. XII., p. 81.



Francis at the same time as that to the Emperor. In this paper they stated that the prospect of peace was ever acceptable to their hearts, and that they trusted the return of tranquillity might be employed to the advantage of truth and religious liberty. "But we do not fear our enemies," they said; "we feel that we have sufficient strength to repel any unjust attack. The grace of God has provided us with the means of defending both ourselves and all that pertains to us. Should outward supports fail, we throw ourselves upon the protection of Him for whose name and in whose cause we strive. It is not for ourselves we tremble, it is for the republic; it is for Germany, which, exposed to the horrors of a civil war, would then feel the deplorable though just chastisements of divine justice. Ardently, therefore, do we pray that peace may be established; but our enemies hate us with a mortal hatred, and it is to be feared that they will never consent to equitable terms of accommodation, till the forces of the empire, which should be employed only against foreign foes, are wholly wasted and destroyed."

These addresses were followed by another, drawn up according to the directions of the protestant theologians and deputies assembled at Smalcalde in the month of March. They again stated in this address, that the Confession of Augsburg was the exposition of that faith in which they would live and die. No hope, no prospect of any kind, was held out to the Emperor, that the smallest concession could be made, in point of doctrine, to the wishes of either friend or foe. His answer was purposely conceived in language which bore a double meaning; but the accession of Granville, a man of moderate principles, to the situation of chancellor, dissipated in some degree the fears of the Protestants, and controlled for a time the machinations of their enemies. A Diet was summoned to meet at Spire in the month of June. To this the protestant princes gladly assented, as offering them another opportunity of fairly and openly stating their opinions. To the Roman Pontiff such an occasion for religious discussion presented itself as fraught with numerous dangers. His plans for a

general council, in which his authority would be supreme, were nearly completed ; but it would evidently be in vain for him to attempt to overturn any decisions arrived at and established by a national synod of the Germans. To prevent as far as possible the evils apprehended, he sent Cardinal Farnese to the Diet, and charged him with whatever force remained in the almost dissipated thunders of the Vatican. The conclusion of the legate's speech was in strange contrast to the assertion with which it commenced, namely, that the sovereign Pontiff desired nothing more earnestly than peace. It was plain, from the language employed, that every opinion which characterized the Reformation must have been given up before the court of Rome could look with tolerance on Protestantism. Such, indeed, was the horror which possessed the mind of the cardinal as he continued to contemplate its doctrines, that he at last openly declared it was impossible almost to determine which were the more opposed to Jesus Christ, the Turks or the Protestants ; but deciding in the next sentence this difficult question, he acquitted the former of any further crime than that of destroying bodies, while on the latter he heaped the charge of hurling into ruin men's immortal souls.

The appearance of an infectious disorder obliged the Diet to remove to Haguenau ; but the elements of dissension were so predominant in the assembly, that no progress was made in the business for which it had been convened. It was proposed, therefore, that another discussion should take place between the divines of the two parties, and they were accordingly summoned to meet at Worms in the month of October. To this conference came Melancthon, Bucer, Calvin, then presiding over a church at Strasburg, Osiander, the father-in-law of Cranmer, and other distinguished reformers. The Catholics were represented by the learned Spaniard Malvender and the accomplished Eckius.\*

It was not till the 14th of January 1541, that the disputants were prepared to commence the debate. The

\* Seckendorf, lib. III., sec. 84.

Augsburg Confession was to form the ground of the conference; but a difficulty presented itself, not expected by the Protestants. Eckius objected to Melancthon that the Confession had been altered since the time of its first publication, and that it, therefore, might not contain a fair exposition of the matters to be discussed. Melancthon acknowledged that, in revising the Latin copy of the articles, he had made some slight alterations; but they consisted chiefly in the improvement of the phraseology, the meaning and substance of the document being the same as at first. This explanation was accepted, and the two disputants immediately commenced the contest. The subject of free-will again afforded an ample field for the display of mingled learning, subtlety, and zeal.\* Both the one and the other of the polemics manifested a desire to bring the dispute to a close on the side of peace and religion. They at length agreed to draw up an article which should embody their mutual opinions. The first stone of a temple of concord seemed thereby to be laid; but scarcely had time been allowed for ascertaining the reality of this approach to pacification, when an order arrived from the Emperor, dissolving the meeting, and directing both parties to hold themselves in readiness for appearing at the Diet of Ratisbonne.

These perpetual interruptions to the progress of in-

\* This forms the second article in the Confession, and deserves to be attentively considered. "Item docent quod post lapsum Adæ omnes homines naturali modo propagati, nascentes habeant peccatum originis; intelligimus autem peccatum originis, quod sic vocant sancti patres et omnes orthodoxi et pie eruditi in ecclesia, videlicet reatum, quo nascentes propter Adæ lapsum, rei sunt iræ Dei et mortis æternæ, et ipsam corruptionem humanæ naturæ propagatam ab Adâ. Et hæc naturæ humanæ corruptio, defectus justitiæ seu integritatis, seu obedientiæ originalis et concupiscentiam complectitur. Estque defectus, horribilis cœcitas et inobedientia, scilicet carere illa luce ac notitia Dei, quæ fuerat futura, in natura integra, item carere illa rectitudine, hoc est, perpetua obedientia, vera, pura ac summa dilectione Dei, et similibus donis integræ naturæ. Quare defectus illi et concupiscentia sunt res damnata, et sua natura digna morte. Estque vicium originis vere peccatum, damnans et afferens nunc quoque æternam mortem, his qui non renascuntur per baptismum et Spiritum Sanctum. Damnant Pelagianos, qui negant peccatum originis, et sentiunt defectus illos seu concupiscentiam esse res indifferentes seu pœnas tantum, nec esse res sua natura damnatas, et somniant hominem legi Dei satisfacere posse, et propter hanc propriam obedientiam coram Deo justum pronunciari."—*Confessio Fid., Wittenberg, 1559.*



quiry were as distressing to every friend of truth, as they were favourable to the political designs of the court of Rome. They endangered the interests of religion, inasmuch as men are led to suppose, by such delays in the course of discussion, that the subject is either beyond the capacity of those who undertake it, or that it is found to be of less importance than was at first considered. To the Pope, on the other hand, they afforded a plea for asserting the necessity of that supreme authority which he claimed as an arbiter in all disputes. If his right to decide were disallowed, there was no other appeal but to a council; and the Protestants might be assured that, in the present temper of the papal court, they would gain little by carrying their cause from the Diet, composed of German princes, to an assembly ruled by the Pontiff and his cardinals.

The situation of the Emperor, politically speaking, was the only defence which the Protestants enjoyed against the discouraging influences of these events. His apprehension of a war with the Turks, and of the dangers which there was reason to fear had been caused by the injustice of his own courts, urged him, at this juncture, to milder measures. The renewal of the conference seemed to present the best means of tranquilizing men's minds, at least for a season. Julius Von Pflug, Gropper, one of the canons of Cologne, Eckius and another theologian, were accordingly selected by the Emperor to consider the dogmas of the Protestants. On the side of the latter were Melancthon, Martin Bucer, and John Pistorius, a clergyman of Nidda in Hesse. Frederic Count Palatine and Granville were appointed presidents of the meeting; and, to give it a proper appearance of formality, a certain number of deputies had permission to witness its proceedings.

If the learned men who were thus assembled came filled with the desire of merely expounding their own sentiments, they were destined to receive a check. The Emperor had undertaken the work of conciliation, and he seemed inclined, like the author of the "Henoticon" in former days, to purchase peace by blending all beliefs in one. At the first meeting a book was laid on

the table by Granville, and which, he said, had been prepared for his master by some learned and pious men, as offering the grounds of union between the disputing parties.

The condition of man before the fall, free-will, the introduction of evil, original sin, and righteousness—these formed the subjects treated of in the beginning of the treatise. To the credit of the unknown author, the language employed was so temperate, and yet so clear, that neither party at first seemed inclined to dispute his expositions. The Protestants felt that, in many respects, they could scarcely have expressed their opinions in terms better chosen to make them known, and yet to soften the violence of hostility. Thus of righteousness it was said, “The pure and well-established doctrine is this, the sinner is justified by a living and active faith; through this, on account of Christ, we become acceptable to God. But by a living faith we mean that motion of the Holy Ghost, through which the whole man, in the truly penitent, is devoted to God, and comprehends the mercy promised in Christ; whereby believers truly perceive that it is by the free grace of God, and for the merits of Christ, that they have received the forgiveness and expiation of their sins!” Again, “Justifying faith is that which worketh by love, since it is certain that through this belief we are justified, inasmuch as it comprehends the mercy and righteousness which are imputed to us on account of Christ, and not on account of the actual worthiness or perfection of the righteousness which is imparted to us in Christ; we are justified through belief in Christ, and by his merits, not on account of our own worthiness or works.”

Here were acknowledgments of the truth of a doctrine, which, had the Roman Church allowed it to be preached with equal clearness to the people, would have prevented, by its living influence, most of the calamities now so greatly to be apprehended. But, inclined as were many of the moderate Catholics to admit this view of justification, and ready as the Emperor plainly was to assist its diffusion, the more powerful of the party

represented it as only calculated to spread the poison of heresy. Unfortunately for mankind, moderate principles are but rarely accompanied with the energy and determination which so frequently characterize a zeal blind and intolerant. There is, however, no necessary hostility to firmness and resolution in the charity of a meek and considerate mind. The man whose candour of spirit leads him to employ a cautious circumspection in all that he says or does, may afford as noble a specimen of courage in being circumspect, as the seemingly bolder tyrant in his daring invasions of the rights of conscience. But while this is true theoretically, in practice we generally find that the moderate party soonest yields to the pressure of circumstances. In the present case, the attempt at conciliation produced no other effect than that of increasing the suspicions and the enmity of those who resolved only to conquer. The book recommended by the Emperor had evidently been compiled with a tender anxiety for truth. It yielded largely to the requirements of Protestantism, but not enough to substantiate the notion that it was written in hostility to the old and established system. The article on justification presented points most adapted to excite the attention of acute and thoughtful theologians; but it offered, at the same time, so wide a field for disputation, that few only were likely to gather from it the food of party rancour. To the sorrow of faithful believers, the more earnest thoughts of men in general were now almost wholly devoted to the consideration of temporal interests. While this indicates the lamentably low state of spiritual religion, it also leads us to believe that the reformers would, at this stage of their proceedings, have had much less to fear, could they have been satisfied with declaring the plain and simple truths of apostolic tradition.

But the rights and privileges of the Church and its officers had been made the subject of many novel propositions. To meet or defend these, demanded the use of arguments unknown to the theologian as such. The dispute thereby assumed an aspect in which it was often difficult to discover the lineaments of spirituality.



When doctrinal propositions were again introduced, the fears and prejudices which belonged only to another part of the subject came in to confuse the heads and corrupt the hearts of the disputants. A strong effort had apparently been made, in the work alluded to, on the side of Christian charity. It might, in reality, be expediency only which prompted the design; but, at all events, the Christian who knew what mighty effects must follow the free preaching of the gospel, would have rejoiced to see tranquillity even partially restored. Surely all was not to be effected by debate and controversy; by the labours of Luther or Melancthon, or any other class of men, however eminent. Something might be left for the gospel itself to do; and therefore, though peace could only be obtained on the condition of many sacrifices, yet, if the Word of God was restored to its proper place in the Church, the present object of believers would have been mainly carried. The success of the first preachers of the gospel would not have been such as it was, had they thought to perfect the conversion of the world by the force of their own zealous determinations. This would have been to anticipate the result of means not yet employed; and this, in some degree, it was which the reformers did, when they expected to see the whole truth acknowledged before the gospel had recovered its influence, either in the schools of divinity, the church, or the world.

The seven sacraments were left untouched in the above treatise; but confession was insisted upon with caution, and the particular enumeration of sins admitted to be not necessary. In regard to the interpretation of Scripture, the right of explaining difficulties was left to the true Church, which had been endowed with that privilege, according to the saying of St. Paul. Yet this power, it was allowed, had not been exercised at all times with like efficacy, for sometimes the light shone bright, at others only dimly. It was also acknowledged that even a general council might err; and, in the article on church government, strong indications existed that the power of the Pope would not be much longer defended on the lofty ground of earlier theories.

“He is not superior,” it is said, “in respect to the higher dignity of his priesthood; but because of the greater extent of his duties, and the office which he holds for preserving the unity of the Church.” The savour of Protestantism is still more perceptible in the observations on the worship of saints and images, which are represented as neither authorized by the Word of God, nor likely to prove useful for the purposes of religion. In the article on the sacrament, an effort seems made to reconcile the conflicting sentiments of the two parties, by leaving each to the free exercise of its own mode of worship. The marriage of the clergy is proved to be lawful by a reference to primitive authorities; and other points intimately connected with the whole system of church discipline are determined with a similar tendency to reform.

As the book which contained these various expositions of doctrine was only presented to the assembly with the view of eliciting opinion, the nature of its contents must not be regarded as directly indicating the views of the Emperor; but it may fairly be concluded that the sentiments expressed were not very foreign to his own, otherwise it would scarcely have been in accordance with honour to allow an important officer of his court to describe it in the terms employed by Granville on presenting it to the divines. The manner in which Charles received it, when illustrated by the notes of the protestant theologians, tends still further to prove that he was not unwilling to consider the present state of the controversy.

Eckius was prevented by a severe illness from taking part in the examination of the book. His skill in argument, and resolute zeal for the cause which he had undertaken to defend, would probably have lengthened the debate, but without bringing it to a more satisfactory conclusion. He had expressed himself, at the first, as wholly opposed to the introduction of the book, and thereby spoke the sentiments of the real Roman catholic party. The opinion of the Emperor, if sincerely given, and of the moderate men on each side, served, in the end, only to elicit a sterner declaration of

principles from the leaders of both parties. By the majority of the bishops the whole affair was regarded as an unauthorized attempt to lower the standard of church authority, and they vehemently insisted on the rejection of the book, and of the reported discussions on its contents. Many of the princes, on the other hand, demanded that it should be delivered to the legate of the Pope; and to their request Charles, though reluctantly, acceded.

The addresses of the legate indicated the necessity of a reformation among the clergy not less plainly than those of the protestant preachers. "Employ not your possessions," he said to the bishops, "in luxurious living and extravagant pomp; they belong to the Church, and ought to be used for the comfort of the poor, and in providing instruction for the ignorant. Select, as teachers of the people, men of virtue and knowledge, and who, by their character and sentiments, may be able to prove, when they rebuke an adversary, that it is not done from a spirit of hatred, but for the sake of charity." In reference to the Protestants he observed, that since they agreed not with the Church on many of its essential doctrines, but yet exhibited signs of a possible return to her communion, he would represent the state of affairs to the Pontiff, in the full assurance that measures would be forthwith taken, either by the calling of a council or other fit means, for the restoration of peace and amity.

But he had little reason to speak of the Protestants as manifesting a more placable disposition in respect to Rome. They hastened to declare that he misrepresented their sentiments when he alluded to the possibility of their tolerating the errors which they now condemned, or re-entering a Church corrupted, like that of Rome, by vices so numerous and enormous. Melancthon, moreover, mild as he was, and anxious to seize every opportunity of promoting peace and concord, began to look with a doubting eye on the turn given to affairs. The book examined in the late conference had awakened suspicion; it contained representations of doctrine sufficiently in harmony with protestant tenets to elicit the



views of the reformers on the minutest points. A feeling now arose, that it had never been the intention of the opposite party to do more than what was necessary for this purpose, and that they had consequently been exposed to trouble and danger without any prospect of advantage.

Luther thought and spoke still more sternly. To him it appeared almost impossible that the late proceedings should have been commenced on a fair and substantial foundation. The book presented to the conference was not a work of authority; it came only with the doubtful recommendation of the Emperor to attention. Still further; whatever might be the views of Charles himself, he had neither right nor influence on his side in a matter which concerned the Church as at present constituted. Had the disputants agreed to modify, to enlarge, or abridge their system of belief, no result could have followed, unless the concessions had been all on the part of the Protestants. The Pontiff was not of a disposition to be guided by a few theologians acting under the eye of a temporal sovereign. That he would ratify conclusions arrived at in a small and comparatively obscure assembly, was as little to be expected as that he would listen to the representations of the reformers themselves. Luther argued, from these and similar considerations, that nothing was to be looked for, even in respect to the points on which a seeming agreement had been obtained. In regard to others, both he and the Elector plainly intimated that they would not yield or change any of the opinions to be found in the Confession of Augsburg.\* So jealous was Luther, in his

\* Seckendorf. Luther speaks with great approbation of what Melancthon had said respecting satisfaction and remission, and exclaims, "God, who began the work without the help of our wisdom, will bring it to an end." In another letter, addressed to the Elector, he says, "That which I said at the first I now say again, and as taught by experience: A union in religion is a popish cheat; it is impossible that Christ should unite with the serpent." In another passage: "If it were indeed the wish of the Emperor or his party to promote concord and union, it must be done according to the will and in the name of God; they must first justify or excuse themselves before God for what they have done, seeing that the Popes in 600 years have betrayed 100,000 souls, and the Emperors in 20 years have burnt, murdered, &c., many pious people, or allowed these things to take place by their edicts."—*Sämmtliche Schriften*, t. xvii. p. 853-4.

review of the statements lately set forth, lest any countenance should be given to error, that he strongly protested against the article on justification, the portion of the book which seemed most calculated to gain the favour of the majority of his party. Blame has been imputed to him in later times for this severity of judgment. But it should be always remembered, that every lesson which he taught had reference to the pure and simple doctrine of justification as set forth in the gospel. If he could have given up his views on this point, he might, without difficulty, have sunk back into the Augustine monk, and offered at the shrine of St. Peter's the spirit, as a sacrifice, whereby he had been led to preach against indulgences and works of supererogation. The language of the article in question was that of accommodation, and Luther never knew what accommodation was. He considered that men's salvation depended upon their acquaintance with the method of deliverance revealed in Scripture, and that it was a fearful affront to the majesty of God and of truth to attempt the substitution of a modified revelation for that which the Holy Spirit gave in the plenitude of love and wisdom. But the article on justification in the book merely stated that man is justified by faith, and omitted that which Luther deemed essential, the declaration that it is altogether "without works."

That at a time when the whole of Christendom was engaged in examining the truth of the reformer's principles, he would have done well to admit of being screened by an imperfect statement of his views, can scarcely be pretended. He would thereby have for ever shut himself out from that glorious band who despised the shame that attended bearing the cross before the heathen, or who at a later period refused not to encounter the terrors of the pile or the scaffold, rather than yield to fellow-Christians a tittle of their full confession. It is evident that the omission of the words "without works" left the sentence in a form which might have allowed of its adoption by the most violent adversaries of the protestant creed. No Christian of any denomination dare venture to assert, unless willing to give up his title to

the name of Christian, that justification could be obtained without faith. The force and evangelical peculiarity of the doctrine lay in the declared sufficiency of that faith itself to justify the sinner. Add the merit of works, or attempt to fill up the vacant space in the system of God's mercy by the satisfactory doings of man, and, whatever else may be the result, however accommodated to theoretical notions of moral grandeur and control, this, at least, must be one of the effects—the gospel, as preached in the first ages of Protestantism, or in the days which our ancestors regarded as days of revival, will lose its main and most exalting characteristic.

But while Luther acted in this matter as the purest sense of duty dictated, it ought not to be decided so readily, as is sometimes the case, that the opposite party was guilty of an uncandid attempt to impose a statement of doctrine, to the defects of which they were consciously alive. They might consider the terms sufficiently explicit, though it would have been a fatal dereliction of duty in Luther to admit them as such. The honour of Luther's triumph, the value of the Reformation, and the truth of the doctrines which it brought again to light, depend not upon our multiplying charges of insincerity, or voluntarily embraced error, against those to whom he was opposed. It is impossible, in the present case, to determine the question whether the suspicions of the Protestants were grounded on actual circumstances, or arose chiefly from the naturally anxious and excited state of their minds. That the conference was merely suggested to betray them, appears disproved not only by the general style of the book, but by the fact that Eckius, from the beginning, expressed his disinclination to engage in the affair, and in this was soon after followed by the most influential of the catholic party. Had the discomfiture of the reformers been the object in view, this would scarcely have occurred; nor is it likely that the subsequent proceedings, on the part both of the Emperor and the princes, would have been so distinguished as they were by weakness and indecision. But to this it may be answered, that such men as Melancthon, with all the advantage of a personal



knowledge of circumstances, and not deficient in the requisites of a sound judgment, were little likely to form a wrong view of proceedings in which they took so deep an interest. We acknowledge the difficulty attending any attempt to decide, where arguments appear thus nicely balanced; and it is not improbable that the dubious nature of the subject had its origin in the simple fact, that the Emperor adopted the suggestion of a few of his counsellors, and endeavoured to put a plan in execution which would never have been attempted had the heads of either the one party or the other been seriously consulted.

Charles found, after a brief trial of his schemes, that he was still deficient in the knowledge whereby churchmen were to be ruled. The bishops, with all who acknowledged their influence, urged the necessity of calling a council, as offering the hope, not of satisfying the reformers by a due examination of their doctrines, but of affording the means for putting them down, and rooting out their heresy. Some, foremost among whom were the Dukes Wilhelm and Ludwig of Bavaria, were not disposed to wait for a council to pass sentence on the schismatics, but insisted on the necessity of proceeding immediately to the work of extirpation. They were before their time in this dark-minded proposal. Few had yet ventured to whisper abroad that the people of a highly civilized land, in the enjoyment of freedom, and distinguished for learning and good morals, might be lawfully attacked, driven from their homes, and slaughtered, to preserve entire the interests of an ambitious Church.\*

The efforts of the legate, and the anxious endeavours of Charles to subdue, for the present, the active spirit of inquiry, proved but so many incentives to new exertions on the part of the reformers. They saw themselves misrepresented, their most virtuous desires made a cause of persecution, their requests to be examined before a competent and free tribunal interpreted as the language of schism and hypocrisy, and terms of peace offered them on the only condition which they could not accept,—the

\* Sleidan. Seckendorf.

violation of their consciences, and the abandonment of truth. It requires not the profession of a particular creed, the badge of allegiance to this or that division of the Christian Church, to enable any honest mind to conclude that the Protestants could not, supposing them in any degree sincere, accept advances made on such conditions. The sentiments contained in the declarations published by the reformers, and especially by Melancthon, were guarded, though not timid. They spoke of a reform in discipline searching and extensive ; of the free preaching of the gospel, whereby every suspected article in modern systems of belief might be subjected to the test of heavenly truth ; but in all this they appealed to the example of past ages, to the simple conclusions that could be drawn from acknowledged facts and principles. They did not constitute themselves as judges, but said, " Judge us and our doctrine ; only let the judgment be according to holiness. We ask for no indulgence in our own persons ; it is for the gospel we contend ; the indulgence we demand is liberty to speak as the Word of God requires for the glory of its Author."

A large number of the princes of the empire expressed themselves willing to acknowledge the authority of the late conference. It was something to find that the divines of the two parties could agree on several points important to the Christian's creed. They desired, therefore, that the doctrines so far admitted might be wholly abstracted from the field of controversy ; and the reformers did not consider that they were promoting schism, when they also expressed a hope that they might be allowed to preach those doctrines as a part of the gospel.

It was not till the 28th of July that the Emperor saw himself at liberty to publish the decree of the Diet. He then made known to the assembly that he was resolved to submit the numerous questions which had arisen to the judgment of the Pope and of a general council ; that if he should fail in persuading the Pontiff to summon a general assembly of the Church, he would, within eighteen months, call upon the orders of the

empire to take into consideration the state of religion, and so provide for the settlement of the questions in dispute ; that, in the mean time, all proceedings against the Protestants should cease, but that they must not fail to preach the doctrines to which they had given assent, according to the interpretation agreed to in the conference ; and that they should refrain, not only from every species of attack on the rights or property of ecclesiastics, but from persuading persons to change their religion.\*

While the Protestants could make no valid objection to the greater part of this address, they saw in the latter clause a half-expressed decree against the liberty which every preacher of the gospel, whatever be his profession, must claim in right of his office. To persuade is one thing, to compel is another ; but even had the Protestants been enabled to take the latter course, and effectually oblige such as were in their power to renounce the dictates of conscience, it would have been remarkable to hear the Church of Rome, or its partisans, dispute the right of such an exercise of authority. The Inquisition was an offspring of zeal which had been baptized with consecrated water from the font of St. Peter. Popes and cardinals were its nursing-fathers, and in the maturity of its growth it manifested its righteous fidelity to the gospel by slaying those who hungered after it as the bread of life. Now, how the devoted members of a Church which thus rejoiced in the exercise of force, could argue against the right of others to insist on the reception of their opinions, if they had power to do so, is a mystery which will not perhaps be made known to that Church till the day when the intricate foldings of self-deceit shall be broken through by the piercing rays of divine justice.

But it is contrary to every principle of Protestantism to use compulsion for the establishment of truth. Though it could appeal, therefore, from the judgments of the Church of Rome, if accused of intolerance, to the acknowledged decisions of that Church, it may be well content to justify itself in whatever it has done for the freedom

\* Sleidan, t. ii., liv. XIV., p. 28.



of Christian teaching. In this respect it rests on the basis of the gospel itself. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season," is the direction of the divine spirit, the substance of Christianity being that good message from heaven which it is the interest of all to hear. That only part of the message should be delivered, or that they who have undertaken the responsibility of making it known, should speak of it in terms less clear or less comprehensive than they have been taught, would be an offence against the Saviour, to be excused by no appeal to the dictations of authority; and if, in the performance of this duty, the teacher should be heard by those who have only partially received the truth, or should he become a witness to the deplorable effects of error to his right hand and to his left, would it be consistent with the obedience which he owes to God to pause in his argument, or to hold back where to make progress seems so evidently his duty?

The answer to these questions is suggested by the zeal which every honest mind must feel for the interests of truth. But it is not to one side only we would apply the principle. It is the great and universal argument of all sincere professors of a creed regarded as involving living, efficacious doctrines. The members of the Roman catholic Church have only acted according to evangelical example, when they have employed all the mighty advantages and influences they possess for communicating their principles to others, and urging them as necessary to salvation. Their employment of force has been the consequence of a dire corruption of the gospel; their earnest endeavours of every other kind have been in conformity with the gospel. Neither would we argue that the exercise of the principle on which the freedom of religious teaching is established, has always been according to the proper spirit of that principle. The species of liberty sought by bold, ambitious, or unsettled minds, is not the liberty which the gospel gives; and it would be a wonder which the world never saw, were a season of change to pass away without raising up many advocates for change not altogether wise and pure. It is only, therefore, on the

supposition that the Emperor aimed against the liberty essential to scriptural teaching, and that the Protestants desired nothing more than a simple permission to set forth the truth in the sincere language of Christian love, that we can sympathize with their opposition to the command against attempting the conversion of surrounding neighbourhoods.

Notwithstanding the efforts which had been made to soften the asperity of party feeling, circumstances daily arose which convinced observing minds that nothing less than an adjustment, founded on the more solid basis of legally acknowledged rights, would permanently restore tranquillity. The Emperor had directed that the processes which so greatly irritated the Protestants should be totally suspended; but there was no security in this against the attack hourly to be expected from the side of Rome. Even in the strength and power to which the reformers had arrived, were to be found new grounds for their suspiciousness and complaints. A small and weak religious body feels itself constrained to cultivate, in the best way it can, the virtues of patience and resignation. It soon becomes accustomed to insult, and familiar with suffering. The unjust decisions of power create little surprise, and awake no thought of resistance. Time matures the sentiment of submission; divine grace renders the heart more and more susceptible to the inward breathings of hope, and the little circle of believers and sufferers learn to rejoice in tribulation, and to regard themselves as owing to this chastisement their adoption into the family of heaven. When a sect, on the other hand, has grown into power through the constant increase of its numbers, when it has gathered to itself the great and the wealthy, and no longer doubts to meditate resistance, the desire of safety extends itself to every point where, not the body, but the conscience or the feelings, might suffer harm. With the establishment of strength, and the multiplying of means of defence, the nice sensibility of spiritual minds yields its place to the ordinary sense of justice which animates men's hearts. The former teaches a suffering but devout resignation, the

latter urges to action; the one resolves all causes of complaint, all sorrows, into a general sentiment of patient hope; the other examines, distinguishes, and calculates, and looks eagerly for the period when it may be able to demand a reckoning at the hands of its unholy oppressors. This was, in some respects, the condition of the Protestants at the present time. Luther and a few others formed a circle within a circle; both had the same centre, but they were influenced in different degrees from without; and while the latter seemed to court the popular breath, the former appeared to contract itself under the vivifying but constraining power of a purer spirit.

The political events of the period were fraught with discomfiture to Charles and his brother Ferdinand.

An expedition to Africa, undertaken by A. D. 1542-4. the former at the close of the preceding year, ended in total defeat; while the king of the Romans found himself equally unsuccessful in his proceedings on the side of Hungary.\* Two Diets were held in the early part of 1542. Many important topics occupied the attention of these assemblies. The Emperor, in passing through Italy, had urged upon the Pontiff the necessity of his calling a council without further delay. A legate, therefore, was sent to the Diet, and the city of Trent was named as the place which had been fixed upon by the papal court. This announcement excited many grateful expressions of satisfaction on the part of King Ferdinand and the German Catholics; but the Protestants saw as many objections to this new proposal as to any of those which had preceded it. In the Diet, which commenced its sittings in July, the subjects proposed in the last were again debated. The state of the Turkish war rendered decision more than ever necessary. Some measures were therefore taken to secure the assistance of the reformers; and a temporary peace agreed to, under the shield of which, it was supposed, they might venture to employ a part of their force against the foreign enemy.

\* Sleidan, t. ii., liv. XIV., p. 143.



Luther viewed the progress of events with the deep interest of a Christian patriot. Enabled at length to separate the consideration of the war, in its general effects, from that of its relation to the immediate interests of his party, he could now enter, with full vigour of spirit, into the feelings of the country at large. It has been observed, and it would seem truly, that this great man had very confused ideas on the subject of the Turkish war when he began to write. The proposition which he then laid down could only have been supported on the principle that every ill, being a divine infliction, ought to be met with passive resignation. Deeply impressed with the conviction that the sins of the age had brought upon it the present calamities, he seemed to consider, that for the Christian to join in an endeavour to repel them would be an instance of want of submission to the determinations of Providence. But cruelty and injustice, though employed against us on account of our sins, are on their own account to be resisted; and when we are not personally interested in the struggle, and see only known offenders sinking beneath the scourge of base violence, it is not less our duty to assist in driving off the assailant than it would be an impulse of nature to oppose him, were his attacks directed against ourselves. To argue otherwise would be to admit the worst enemies of humanity into the tents of Israel, nothing less than the openly declared will of God being sufficient to authorize our resigning the lives or liberties of our fellow men into the hands of barbarous oppressors. The more careful consideration of the subject had brought Luther to adopt an opinion better calculated to promote the good of his country.\*

\* Melancthon speaks with his usual feeling and eloquence on this subject in a letter to Joachim Marquis of Brandenburg. "From all that I have ever read," he says, "of the history of nations, the Turks seem in every respect to be the most impious and cruel. Other kings and people have carried on war that they might improve the state of their country, or give greater stability to the laws and to religion. But the Turks provoke war for no other purpose than to destroy, or reduce those whom they conquer to the most wretched slavery. They profess, according to the law of Mahomet, to be the enemies of all nations. They ought, therefore, to be repelled as robbers; and it is a great consolation to know that we resist them by the command of God."—*Epist. a Peucero*, 1570, p. 73.

A war with Henry of Brunswick, the most violent and unjust of the partisans of Rome, was one of the first melancholy results of the present state of affairs. That prince had provoked hostilities as well by his secret machinations against the Protestants as by open violence. The Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave determined to repress his insolence, and, after rapidly scouring his territories, besieged him in the fortress of Wolfenbittel, whence he made a precipitate escape, and took refuge with the princes of Bavaria. This bold and successful step on the part of the reformers was followed by a fresh demonstration of firmness in the Diet held at Nuremberg in the month of July. "We cannot," said they, "allow our allies to be wantonly oppressed, without offering them our aid; we have done so at vast expense, but we have not failed to furnish the promised contributions to the Turkish war."\* Henry of Brunswick, on the other hand, appealed for relief to the imperial chamber: as might have been expected, the decision was in his favour. But the Elector and his allies disputed the authority of the judges, and founded their counter appeal on the unfulfilled promise of the Emperor that the chamber should be reformed, and established on a broader and juster basis. The sittings of the Diet, which were prolonged to the beginning of the following year, enabled both parties to press their suit before King Ferdinand and the representatives of the Emperor. On the one side were ranged all the most influential members of the catholic body, who had for the support of their cause the formal decision of a court of justice, together with many means of appealing effectually to both the fears and the prejudices of their chiefs. On the other stood the Protestants, with nothing to aid their cause but the arguments which might prove its justice against the cavils of their opponents. This was not sufficient to protect them. Ferdinand decided that the judges could not be removed, without better reasons for such a proceeding than those which had been alleged. Henry

\* Sleidan, t. ii., liv. XIV., p. 74. The suspicions of the Protestants were first excited by certain letters which fell into their hands in the year 1538.

of Brunswick, therefore, was to be restored, and the Protestants were to bear, as they best might, the injuries and affronts which he had heaped upon their heads. In a different state of affairs this would have filled the adverse party with a feeling of triumph; but it was soon discovered that the reformers were not now of a temper to bear aggressions patiently, and that the affair between them and Henry of Brunswick could not be settled in so summary a manner. It was therefore finally determined that the processes of the chamber should be suspended for a time, and that in the meanwhile a new attempt should be made to reform what was said to be amiss. The perseverance of the reformers in the exercise of what they esteemed their rights, both political and religious, was further seen in the settlement of the bishopric of Nuremberg. On the diocese becoming vacant, the Elector of Saxony, with a natural desire to promote the interests of his religion, sought to supply the vacancy by choosing a man of similar principles and acknowledged piety. But his right to interfere in the appointment of a bishop was disputed, and he refrained from this exercise of princely power till the opinion of some eminent theologians had assured him of the justice of his claims. The chapter of the cathedral had, in the mean time, nominated Julius Von Pflug, a divine distinguished for piety and learning, but, at the same time, a stern opposer of the principles of the Reformation. It does not appear that the Elector objected to the proceeding of the chapter on the principle that it had invaded his rights. In his letter to that body he distinctly stated, that he would have supported it in the exercise of its privileges, had it made choice of a man less obnoxious to the Protestants, or more willing to correct abuses. To the senate of the town, also, he wrote in terms expressive of strong disapprobation of the appointment of Julius: "One more disagreeable to me," he said, "or more opposed to the reformation of religion, could not have been found."

But the known sentiments of the Elector did not prevent the chapter from proceeding to confirm the appointment. Its choice was soon after ratified by



the Emperor; and the Prince, unable to repress his indignation, immediately prepared to secure by force what had not been yielded to persuasion. This course was adopted in the spirit of the age, rather than in that of the Reformation. The chapter, in electing a bishop, had only acted according to precedent, established by the non-interference of successive electors. That it did not choose a friend of the Reformation was to be regretted by the friends of religious liberty; but if it had any right to choose, it was bound in conscience to fix on a man whose principles best accorded with its own; and if it was not to be allowed to exercise its franchise agreeably to the dictates of conscience, it did, in reality, lose its privilege as an elective body.

The appearance of troops ready to lay siege to the episcopal residence, the impatient zeal of the Elector, with the quick apprehension of consequences common to excited minds, taught the advisers of the Prince to warn him against a proceeding so little in harmony with his other measures. Considered politically, it was inexpedient, fraught with immediate danger to the party, and calculated to awaken jealousies in the dominant Church, which, whatever became of questions of doctrine, would ever render Saxony a suspected and hated territory. Viewed in reference to religion, or to the state of the Protestants as a body of spiritual Christians, it was still more inexpedient; for such proceedings indicated a want of confidence in the power of divine truth, an inclination to return to the old leaven of a corrupt priesthood, or to anticipate the progress of events carried forward by the hand of the true guide of the Church. If it had been necessary for the good of the gospel that the bishopric of Nuremberg should be held by a reformer, it would have been effected by means corresponding to the spirit of the gospel, and not by the use of weapons which belong only to the world and the enemies of peace. The wise representations of his theologians on the subject did not produce that effect on the mind of the Prince which might have been looked for; and, pursuing his own course, he placed Nicolas Von Amsdorf at the head of the diocese,—thereby taking

a step which might be admired for the freedom and determination it exhibited, but which was to be lamented for its mixture of injustice to Julius Von Pflug, and its undue assumption of a power dangerous even under circumstances most favourable to its purity.\*

Other events, but of a less dubious character, occurred about the same time, all tending to prove the increase of power and influence on the side of the reformers. Two prelates, the archbishop of Cologne and the bishop of Munster, declared their intention of commencing the reform of their dioceses. The former of these distinguished men had long viewed with sorrow the want of spirituality in his clergy, and the miserable ignorance which prevailed among the people. In the splendid pomps of his Church, the rich ornaments of its walls and its altars, he beheld the results of that system of compensation which, in a dark age, was to make up for the want of substantial truth by a superfluity of emblems, and atone for allowing the body to waste away by increasing the magnificence of its raiment. Doubtful of his own sufficiency to conduct the meditated reform, he sought the assistance of Martin Bucer, Melancthon, and other evangelical teachers on whose learning and discretion he might most safely rely. The first intimation of his design was given as early as the year 1536, when he assembled the bishops of his province at Cologne, and earnestly entreated them to consider the present state of discipline and opinion in their respective dioceses. His views, to a certain extent, were readily adopted, and the more active theologians employed themselves in remodelling both the doctrines and customs which had hitherto prevailed among them unexamined and unquestioned.

But little practical improvement followed from this imperfect attempt at reform. Towards the close of the year 1539, therefore, the archbishop invited Melancthon

\* Schröck, t. i., p. 615; *Sämmtliche Schriften*, t. xvii., p. 122. The epithets which Luther heaps upon the Pope in the letter which contains an account of this matter, manifest a deplorable want of temper in the writer; but he appears at the moment to have gathered into his mind all that could be recollected of the abominations committed by the luxurious and haughty prelacy of Rome against Christian truth.

to assist him with his advice. That eminent scholar, however, merely encouraged him in general terms to press forward in the design which he had undertaken. "Be not satisfied," he said, "with apologies for great abuses, but correct them." We all know how easily such advice is given, and how difficult it is to follow. The reform of a church, in fact, is scarcely less difficult than the establishment of one; and unless a man possess either great power, or the energy of a most devoted piety, he is not sufficient for such things. Hermann of Cologne saw this, and Melancthon might have concluded beforehand that his advice would be of no more value than as it was expressive of the sympathy of the good and wise. The fame of Martin Bucer next attracted the notice of this earnest and indefatigable prelate. Ever anxious to establish his purpose, but oppressed with doubts as to the most effectual means for bringing it to bear, he eagerly turned to every source of strength and intelligence. Bucer was one of the best counsellors he could have chosen. His great acquirements and well-known moderation eminently qualified him for an adviser. The reputation which he possessed as a powerful and eloquent preacher, obtained him a reception at Bonn that considerably increased the desire of the archbishop to secure his co-operation. But difficulties of every kind opposed the wishes of the prelate. The union of the political with the ecclesiastical dignities in one person was found, on this as on other occasions, to multiply beyond measure the obstacles to a spirit of reform. As a simple ecclesiastic, with no interest to support but that of God, with no honour to seek but that of truth, with no possessions for which to contend but that of a conscience void of offence, the graces of the spirit in himself, and the ingrafted virtues of the people committed to his care, what doubts or apprehensions could an ecclesiastic have admitted, which did not bear particularly on the interests of the gospel? But in the case of Hermann of Cologne it was not simply the difficulties which belonged to his own high station that retarded the progress of his re-



forms. The clergy of his province were as adverse to improvement as, in other districts, were the most wealthy and exalted of prelates. They viewed every step which he took with a jealousy bordering on the most bitter enmity; and it would have required the power of a man much more energetic and highly endowed than this amiable bishop to have stemmed and turned the tide which thus set in against him.

Two more years of anxious toil were passed ineffectually away, when Hermann resolved on making a decisive effort to perfect the object which had so painfully occupied his thoughts. Bucer and Melancthon were both summoned to his councils. They came, aided and supported by the sympathizing advice of the Elector of Saxony. According to his directions, their avowed design was to draw up articles of reformation on the use of the holy sacrament and other important points, which might remain in force till the assembling of a general council, or of a national synod, in Germany. The publication of the archbishop's wishes, founded on the arguments of Bucer and Melancthon, excited very different feelings among the civil and ecclesiastical orders. To the former it presented many reasons for congratulation. The abuses of the Church were too evident to leave men of business indifferent to the prospect of their correction; while the mass of the people, already awakened to the desire of change, even where not excited by purer motives, viewed with mingling curiosity and hope the proceedings of the reformers. But the same undertaking contemplated by the clergy exhibited only proofs of a spirit bold, innovating and licentious. Their opposition was rendered formidable by the long-standing power and wealth of the body, but still more by the deep roots which superstition had struck into the soil of Cologne. After that soil has been ploughed up by many ages of fierce revolution, the stranger still views with astonishment the pervading influence of the antient spirit. The altars are yet frequented by crowds who venerate the same relics, delight in the same legends, and, but for the more

liberal and enlightened temper of the ruling clergy, would soon hurry back to the darkness from which they have only lately begun to emerge.

It is easy to perceive how formidable an opposition must have existed in a place thus circumstanced, and when all the forces of the old religion were in full operation. The virtuous prelate pointed in vain to the abuses which weakened the best influences of the gospel: he reasoned to deaf ears when he attempted to prove the late origin and the inutility of the ceremonies which captivated the imagination of the people; and the plans whereby he hoped to lessen the pride and sensuality of the clergy, roused against him a host which he was almost wholly unprepared to meet. Great as was the power of the bishops when acting in conformity with the will of Rome, and the interests of the inferior clergy, it was now to receive one of the most conspicuous checks to which it had ever been subjected; and this check to the authority of an ecclesiastical office, once considered as supreme, came from the side most interested in its present enlargement and support. Some of the canons of the cathedral could venture to proclaim that they would teach the archbishop his duty; and, in compliance with the spirit thus exhibited, preparations were secretly made for compelling him by force to cease from his reformatations.

The more watchful and zealous of the Protestants, on the other hand, invited him to pursue his plans with greater determination; and the members of the league of Smalcalde declared their readiness to assist him by all their power and influence, should he need protection. His mild character, and the situation in which he stood as one of the electors of the empire, as well as a bishop, prevented the consequences which, under other circumstances, must have immediately followed these proceedings. He was contented to urge the necessity of reform, and establish it where he could. His faith manifested itself in his willingness to bear reproach, rather than in the boldness or vigour of his actions. But, refraining as he did from adopting those measures which, with his resources, another might have employed, the

court of Rome was not less hostile to his proceedings than it could have been had he acted in the spirit of the Landgrave of Hesse, or any other of the more violent reformers. After allowing him to be reviled and insulted in every way by his clergy, it at length pronounced against him a sentence of deposition and excommunication. This was rendered comparatively abortive by the consideration which the Emperor could not avoid bestowing on a possessor of the electoral dignity. The progress of domestic troubles furnished him with the means of trying the prelate's loyalty. He demanded his assistance in summoning the Germans to resist the growing discontents. The archbishop readily published the imperial manifestoes; but this was not sufficient to save him from the effects of papal hatred. Charles allowed himself to be impelled into an act of hostility which bears all the marks of tyranny and injustice. Too conscientious to desist from an attempt in which were involved the best interests of mankind and the gospel, Hermann still persevered in his endeavours to follow the suggestions of his protestant advisers. The thunders of the Vatican found an echo in the council-chamber of Charles. An order was issued, by which the authorities of Cologne were directed to transfer their allegiance from Hermann to his late suffragan, already nominated to the dignity by the sentence of the Pope. Many of the nobility, affectionately attached as they were to the venerable prelate, expressed their sympathy by protesting against the decree; and it evidently needed but little further provocation to rouse them into open hostility. The Duke of Cleves now presented himself as a mediator; and the archbishop, ever ready to sacrifice his own interests to those of his people, consented to resign his dignity, that they might be spared the dangers of a civil war.\* No sooner was his determination made known, than all which he had done for the reform of the diocese was annulled, and the clergy returned rejoicing to the uninterrupted possession of their rights, and to the practices and the license of

\* Sleidan, t. ii., lib. XVIII., p. 397. The resignation was signed on the 25th of January 1557.



antient superstition. But unfortunate as was the general result of Hermann's endeavours, they were not without fruit. The grains of gold found in the stream bear no proportion to the sand which is sifted away, but they well reward the labour of discovery. To the people at large the triumph of the clergy afforded a ready plea for returning to the listless confidence which gives repose to the conscience without the demands of inward sanctification. It was impossible, however, that the earnest preaching of the archbishop's associates should be heard and immediately forgotten; or that good should fail to be found, under one form or the other, where the spirit and the providence of God had both taken part in the work. The penitence which had been awakened in the few, was the precious seed which in due time was to produce a harvest of humility in the many; and though, at the time, the power of superstition seemed unbroken, yet its roots were henceforth to be exposed to the influence of a current of hidden waters as uncongenial to its nature as the soil from which it sprang was favourable to its growth.

Equally impressed with the necessity of a reformation, the Bishop of Munster steadily pursued the path marked out for him by Hermann of Cologne. But, not trusting to his own resources, he joined the league of Smalcalde; and, in return for the additional influence which his name and station brought to the allies, received the promise of immediate assistance, should he find himself attacked by the clergy of his diocese.\*

The force of opinion was strikingly illustrated about this time in the parts of Germany over which the Emperor and his brother possessed the most direct control. Ferdinand himself appears to have been convinced of the influence of the new doctrines in Austria and Bohemia. To the earnest representations of a large body of the nobles and people that they might be allowed to enjoy the free preaching of the gospel, he replied, "That he had never opposed the diffusion of scriptural knowledge; but that they must remain contented with that which had satisfied their forerunners, without

\* Sleidan, t. ii., lib. XIV., p. 149.

attempting innovations in established customs." This answer repressed the hopes of immediate emancipation, and the Austrian reformers continued from year to year to struggle with difficulties peculiar to their situation ; but religion itself was, in many cases, the more essentially triumphant from this stern and long-enduring trial of its purity.

In the February of 1544, the Elector of Saxony, with the other heads of the protestant party, assembled at Spire, where they anxiously awaited the arrival of the Emperor to open the Diet in person. A. D. 1544-6. The state of affairs at the present moment led both parties to look with more than usual interest to this meeting. Charles had again to oppose the united powers of France and Turkey, and in neither case was the war productive of events favourable to his views. To the willing assistance, therefore, of the German princes and free cities he could alone look with hopes of better success ; and this help, he had long learnt to conclude, was not to be had while the minds of the people were agitated by suspicion, or irritated by resentment. The meeting of the present Diet consequently offered an opportunity to the Protestants for pressing their cause, which, impelled as the most cautious were by the boldness of their associates, was not likely to be neglected. Both the Emperor and Ferdinand appeared in the assembly, and hopes were entertained that they would now listen favourably to the representations of the numerous princes who supported the Saxon reformers. But these expectations seemed on the point of being destroyed by the Duke of Brunswick, against whose appearance in the Diet the Elector of Saxony protested as a violation of justice and propriety. The rising storm was silenced by the intervention of some of the princes, and the assembly proceeded to the more important business for which it was convened.

The inclination of the Elector of Saxony to promote sentiments of peace and amity was manifested in his long-delayed acknowledgment of Ferdinand as King of the Romans. This produced, for the moment, a corresponding feeling on the part of the latter, who promised

his daughter Eleanor to the eldest son of the Elector, should they be found hereafter to agree in belief.\* The Diet continued its sittings till the 10th of June, when it published the decree; and it was then easy to perceive that a tendency to soften and compromise prevailed more strongly than ever in the imperial councils. "It was impossible," said this solemn decision of the Germanic states, "to treat rightly of religious matters while the country was occupied with war." The question of reform, therefore, was referred to the next Diet; and in the mean time each party was to refrain from attempting any thing, either secretly or openly, against the other. "Let us all," said the Emperor, "do what lies in our power to promote peace, and let not religion be made a cause of dissension and tumult. What churches at present possess let them continue to enjoy, whatever be the profession of the party to which they belong; and let their revenues be employed for the maintenance of the ministers, the support of schools, and the relief of the poor." With regard to the imperial chamber, it was decreed that the judges should retain their office till the period fixed for their removal was accomplished; but that persons should be eligible to the dignity without religious distinction. In conformity with the spirit of this declaration, all actions already commenced against Protestants on account of their doctrines were suspended; and the only party concerned in the late events, who found no improvement in their prospects by this decree, were the Anabaptists, against whom the penal laws were left in full force.

Temperate as were the sentiments expressed in this decree, and gratified as were many of the Protestants at the mild bearing of the Emperor and Ferdinand, they had in reality made no advance towards the establishment of their views. Nothing positive had been granted

\* This was the article of a secret treaty: the only parties to which it was known were Granville, who signed it on the part of the Emperor,—Hoffman, who appeared for Ferdinand,—and the venerable Pontanus and Burcart, who represented the Elector. Not even the Landgrave of Hesse was aware of the transaction, and it may reasonably be questioned whether any of the parties engaged in the business ever regarded it as any thing more than a mere complimentary pretension to friendship.—*Sleidan*, t.ii., liv. XV., p. 226.



except the promise of a reform of the chamber, which was to be deferred for three years. The exhortations to peace and forbearance were little better than the fillings up of the address, and to a practical man like Charles could have appeared in no other light. But ineffectual as was the decree, viewed sedately and practically, the catholic party regarded it as far too favourable to the Protestants, and as even indicating a degree of prejudice on the side of the Emperor which merited the reprobation of the papal court. Cochläus led the way in these criticisms on the decree of the Diet, and he was speedily followed by the Pope himself, who angrily declared that Charles had, by this proceeding, both shaken the Church and placed his own soul in danger of destruction. Among the chief points of complaint was the freedom with which he had spoken respecting the calling of a council, the whole business of which ought to have been referred exclusively to the Pontiff. Another was found in the liberty granted to the reformers, which was described as giving a permission to heretics to judge of religion; and these various reproofs were summed up in a solemn warning drawn from the example of those antient princes who, for interfering with things which concerned the Church, had been given up to the wrath of God.

The war with France was brought to a speedy termination by the unexpected and decisive movements of Henry VIII. Charles saw himself constrained to enter into a negotiation on terms little agreeable to his pride and ambition, and which, it is suspected, would never have been accepted, had he not formed schemes against the liberties of the German Protestants, which it seemed to be his interest to leave no longer unexecuted.\* This, however, is but a surmise, and, as it involves a serious charge against the political and kingly honour of Charles, ought not to be credited without careful examination. It is possible that the suspicion may be right in the outline, and yet not true in detail. Like other public men, Charles had doubtless many half-formed plans in his mind, the justice or injustice of which had never

\* Schröck, t. i., p. 634; Planck, l. c., p. 252.

yet been examined. That was left for a period when they might be more aptly put to the test of expediency; and he probably, therefore, permitted the decree at Spire to go forth, leaving unchanged his intention of reducing the Protestants to submission, but making no assault upon his conscience, because he could not yet see to what extent violence might be necessary.

There are many difficulties in the history of the Reformation which arise from our ignorance of the personal motives of the parties concerned. Thus, in the present instance, if Charles was chiefly concerned with establishing his own authority in Germany, the league of Smalcalde must have excited in his mind the most violent prejudices against every thing which assumed the name or character of Protestantism; but if he simply desired the pacification of the country, he would regard the circumstances in which it was placed as the result of events not less lamentable to the sovereign than to those whom they oppressed. But unfortunately for the reputation of Charles in the eyes of posterity, he had no sooner ended the war with France than he began to pursue a different line of conduct towards the reformers.

The Diet reassembled at Worms in January 1545, and the first object which engaged the attention of the Protestants was the arrest and threatened execution of the pious preacher of Tournay, Pierre Du Breuil. Their anxious intervention proved of no avail; the devout and zealous Du Breuil fell a hasty sacrifice to the fanaticism of his judges; and the assembled princes found in this event fresh cause for pressing the demand which they came to make, with somewhat of an angry impatience. The fate and character of this early martyr to the reformed doctrines remind us of those of yet earlier sufferers in the cause of divine truth. He had learned the principles of the Reformed Church at Strasburg, and, at the request of some inhabitants of Tournay, he was induced to make a journey into the Netherlands, where his preaching soon attracted the notice of the people. They were awakened by his expositions of divine truth, alarmed by his warnings, and thereby rendered impatient of the darkness in which they had hitherto been

held. The excitement thus occasioned in different quarters of the country could not be concealed from the magistrates, especially in Tournay. It was traced to the influence of Pierre Du Breuil, and measures were immediately taken for his apprehension. But his friends were on the watch; and when it was found that the gates were closely guarded to prevent his escape, they prepared ropes, and let him down over the city walls. The descent was made in safety, and the fugitive had seated himself on the ground to recover breath before he commenced his journey. Full of anxiety to see him on his route, one of his friends leant over the ramparts to whisper him a farewell. In the act of resting his hand upon the wall he detached a loosened stone; it fell, and descending on Du Breuil, broke his thigh. The pain inflicted by the wound was excruciating; and the sufferer, forgetting his perilous situation, uttered loud lamentations. As the guards were near at hand, he was immediately heard, and, being seized, was cast, notwithstanding his mutilated state, into prison. Loaded with chains like the basest of malefactors, he appeared before his prejudiced judges to answer the accusations against his doctrines rather than himself. On being interrogated respecting his belief in the real presence, he replied, that he believed the true body and blood of Christ were received in the sacrament, but by the spirit of faith, and not by the mouth; that the substance of the bread and wine was not changed; but that, when, in conformity with the directions of Christ, the supper was celebrated in the Church in a known language, and in a manner intelligible to the communicants, then the elements were truly consecrated, and that by virtue of the Saviour's words; that as for the low and secret way in which the priests spoke to the bread and wine, it was more proper for sorcerers and magicians than Christians; that the popish mass, in fact, had no resemblance to the supper of the Lord, but was merely a human invention, and one degrading to the majesty of Christ, and that the adoration of the consecrated bread was pure idolatry, it being the worship of the creature instead of the Creator.



His answers to the other questions with which he was pressed were not less bold and evangelical. When asked what opinion he entertained respecting purgatory, he replied that the blood of Christ was the only purgatory in which he believed, for that that was sufficient not only to take away the guilt, but to deliver from the punishment of sin; that masses and prayers for the dead were therefore as impious as they were useless; and that as far as the saints were concerned, the true way of honouring them was to imitate their natures, not address them with adoration. Of original sin he said, that by the fall of Adam the nature of man had become wholly corrupt, and his free-will so enfeebled, that without the grace of God he could do no good thing; but that man regenerated might, by the influence of God, produce good, as a good tree produces good fruit; that it is faith only which can give us safety, a faith which enables us to rely entirely on the promises of God, and teaches us to believe that our sins are pardoned for the sake of Jesus Christ.

In a similar spirit he denounced the use of images in churches, and whatever else might foster superstition in the minds of the people. Of baptism he spoke with profound reverence, describing it as the sign of the alliance which God has made with us, and, at the same time, as that of the mortification of the death unto sin, and rising unto righteousness, which ought to be found in every Christian character. Vows and private confession were spoken of as contrary to Scripture, and inexpedient; but he insisted with equal earnestness on the duty of every man's confessing his sins from day to day before God.

The last moments of this faithful and true believer were employed in writing an affectionate letter to his wife. He described to her the proceedings which had been instituted against him, the state of his mind under these trials, and the nature of the punishment by which, on the morrow, he was to be passed from time to eternity. "The servant," said he, in conclusion, "ought not to look for better treatment than his master;" and, in the full assurance that they who suffer with Christ

shall also reign with him, he joyfully resigned his soul into the hands of the almighty Father, after having patiently endured the prolonged agony of dying by a slow fire.\*

It was on the authority of edicts proceeding directly from the Emperor that Peter Du Breuil was apprehended and executed. Whatever, therefore, might be the feelings of Charles respecting the German Protestants, it is manifest that he had no intention of tolerating the Reformation where he possessed power to suppress it. The barbarity and injustice of his decrees in the Low Countries were aggravated by the constrained mildness of his late behaviour towards the reformers of Germany. It was probably owing to considerations of this kind, and to the general intelligence daily received from different parts of Europe, that the Protestants looked with so much suspicion on the offers of catholic princes. That they could, in one country or province, tolerate opinions, for professing which they put men to death in another, was found to be possible; but that those who would act thus deserved confidence, was a notion which the weakest or most inexperienced of minds only could be fitted to indulge.

The Diet was occupied, at its opening, with the address of Ferdinand, who spoke of the preparations made for the opening of the council at Trent, and repeated his entreaties that the present religious discontents might at least be silenced till something was done to retard the progress of the Turks. To this the Protestants replied, that no hopes of prosperity could be entertained while the country continued in its present state of excitement; that if the time did not now allow of a formal discussion of the points at issue, it was yet necessary that the promise of peace should be placed on a securer foundation than was at present the case; that with regard to the council of Trent, they did not recognise its authority; but that as soon as they were satisfied respecting the means allowed them for personal security, they would readily discuss the subject of the Turkish war.

\* Gerdes, t. iii., sec. lv., p. 184.

Ferdinand and the rest of the catholic princes now insisted, that whatever related to religion ought to be referred to the council, as the only assembly properly authorized to discuss such questions. The disingenuousness of this reply was at once apparent. It had been determined that the present Diet should devote itself almost exclusively to the examination of the protestant controversy. Intermediate meetings of the parties concerned had accordingly taken place, for the purpose of considering the outline of an arrangement; and many were led to entertain a hope that, if not from any higher principle, at least from that of expediency, the Emperor might be induced, at this period, to establish a safe and general toleration.

So little progress was made in the discussion, that above three months passed away without bringing either party nearer to the attainment of its object. The Emperor arrived on the 16th of May, and was immediately followed by Cardinal Farnese, the envoy of the Pope. It is said that not only was the cardinal deputed to urge the Emperor to make war on the Lutherans, but that letters were soon after received from Rome, in which the Pope made a direct offer of troops, if the Emperor would join him in the enterprise. The probability that there is some truth in these statements, appears from the undisguised manifestation of sentiment on the part of the Catholics at Worms. An Italian monk, it is added, did not fear to declare openly in the pulpit that the Emperor, who was present, had too long delayed the performance of his duty, by allowing the Lutherans to escape destruction. "It is time," said he, turning to Charles, "that you fulfil your office: you have remained inactive when the necessity of the times cried aloud for your interference. God has heaped favours upon your head, and has appointed you to be the defender of the Church. Bring out your forces, then, and destroy this impious race: to let them live, infecting and confounding, as they do, whatever is holy, is itself a crime. Say not that you will act presently; it must be done at once, without another moment's delay; for behold, every day adds fresh thousands to those whose



eternal salvation is endangered by these wretched men, and of you will an account of their souls be demanded, if you refuse the remedy which it is in your power to afford."

The sudden and secret departure of the cardinal increased the suspicions awakened by language so daring and irritating. But the Emperor and his ministers continued to employ every art of persuasion with the Protestants to induce them to acknowledge the authority of the council. When persuasion proved vain, and they urged their right to reject the decisions of a tribunal from which no justice could be expected, they were answered by Charles, that he could not free them from their obligation to obey such an assembly; "for how," added he, "should I excuse myself for so doing to other kings and princes; or of what use would the council be, assembled as it has been on account of Germany, if Germany alone were left at liberty to despise its decrees?"

This reasoning would have been correct, had there existed any principle which bound the Christian world to obey an assembly convened without attention to its most important and legitimate rights. Christians are taught to render homage to the temporal powers of the state, and to yield a pious and filial obedience to those who have the charge over them in the church to which they belong; but as Christians, considered simply as such, and independently of recognised relations and obligations, they cannot be called upon to acknowledge any authority which is not indisputably conformable to truth and equity. A general council depends, for its power and very existence, on the sanctions of Christian knowledge and Christian love. It cannot, by any conceivable principle, be of greater authority than the Catholic Church itself, the synonyme of which is, the communion of saints. And the communion of saints is one of the strictest fidelity, mutual confidence, benevolence, and acknowledged equality of interests. That believers in the gospel, therefore, should be amenable to a judicature which had rejected these characteristics of true catholicity, could only be pretended by the boldest invasion

of Christian freedom—a freedom which the believer himself has no right or power to alienate, and which is so essential to the progress of the gospel, that had it not been contended for at the beginning, the world could never have been converted ; the Church of Rome itself would scarcely have had a beginning.

But the Emperor knew little, and cared less, about the principles of Christian liberty or the rights of believers. He saw that to leave the Pope in possession of his claims respecting the council, would be to secure the balance of power in his own favour. This clearly understood, he resolutely and coldly opposed every attempt on the part of the Protestants to secure their independence ; and it was chiefly, therefore, from the mere juncture of political circumstances that the Council of Trent was allowed to assume the lofty tone of a universal authority. Without the concurrence of Charles, the Pontiff would never have dared to assemble it ; and for that concurrence he was indebted to the fears which the monarch entertained on viewing the proceedings of the League of Smalcalde.\*

It was answered, on the side of the Catholics and Imperialists, that the Protestants refused to attend before they knew whether their suspicions had any just foundation ; and that, at all events, they ought to present themselves in the assembly, and there expose the reasons which induced them to dispute its authority. There was an appearance of candour in this reply ; but the Protestants contended, that as the Pope had already condemned their religion, and most barbarously punished many of their brethren, they could cherish no expectation of finding at the council any better treatment, or more favourable attention to their arguments.

\* The document which purports to be the agreement entered into between Charles and the Pope states that they had determined to unite their forces, because the Protestants had intimated at Smalcalde that they would not obey the council. The instrument contains ten articles, in the first of which the allies bind themselves to employ their strength against all who should persevere in opposing the council ; and still further, to wage war against them till they should return to the old, true, undoubted belief and obedience of the Holy See. The agreement is dated Rome, 26 June 1546.—*Sämmtliche Schriften*, t. xvii., p. 1825.

Such was the determination of the two parties; and, rather than yield, each exposed itself to an increase of the danger peculiar to its situation. Charles, being at length convinced that he should in vain seek effective help against the Turks without conciliating the reformers, preferred making a truce with the infidel to yielding to the force of protestantism. The reformers, on the other hand, could not be blind to the temper or the movements of their enemies. Politicians and statesmen may whisper in a language unintelligible to mankind at large, but the present contest was not one in which the mere strength of multitudes was opposed to the power or experience of subtle intellects. There was to be found in each party a full proportion of accomplished statesmen, high-minded princes and warriors, men versed in all the ways of the world, and prepared by habit, and still more by the present deep excitement of personal interest, to penetrate the best concealed of hostile preparations. Little doubt, therefore, exists that the intentions of Charles were well known to most of the protestant leaders; but they preferred risking the expected contest to giving up any portion of their independence. Years had now passed since they began to feel the responsibility of their position as defenders of religious truth; they had become accustomed to the painful apprehensions inspired by the continual threats of their enemies; and, but for the cause of peace and mercy, would probably have preferred to try their strength at once to lingering, as they had done, in the perpetual dread of some unexpected and ruinous assault.

The Diet closed its sittings on the 4th of August, but with an intimation from the Emperor that it should re-assemble at the commencement of the following year, for the purpose of taking into consideration the points which had defied, at present, the best efforts of his counsellors to adjust. Another conference was spoken of, but the Catholics rejected the proposal, and affairs assumed an aspect in which suspicion was the most prominent feature. The Landgrave of Hesse had, in the mean time, commenced open hostilities with the



Duke of Brunswick; and a few months made him master not only of the dominions of that prince, but of the persons of himself and his son. Charles beheld this event with some uneasy feeling. The fallen prince had acted in contempt of the laws, but he sought by this violence to support a system which the greater number of those who hated the Reformation regarded as of more value than the laws. From the subsequent proceedings of the Emperor, it can hardly be supposed that he would have lamented, had the war ended in the ruin of the Landgrave and of the Elector of Saxony. This would have saved him both from the danger and the ignominy attending an unjust war begun by himself, and have enabled the party of which he was the recognised chief to triumph, without the necessity of defending the means by which their triumph had been gained.\*

With the commencement of the year the Protestants resumed their deliberations. The meeting at Frankfort A. D. 1546. was attended by many of the most influential men of the party; and about the same time the catholic theologians prepared themselves for the colloquy at Ratisbonne. They were soon joined by Bucer and others, as representatives of the Protestants. As there was little promise of concord at the beginning of the discussion, so was there still less as the disputants pursued their argument. The subject of free-will had of late been spoken of by theologians with more mildness than at an earlier period of the Reformation. This, it is probable, would still have been the case, but for the zeal of a theologian from Paris, Pierre Malvenda, who, angrily stating his objections to the protestant doctrines, broadly affirmed that justification belongs not to faith

\* Luther regarded the defeat of Henry of Brunswick as an event of no slight importance to the cause of the Protestants. In a letter addressed to the Elector, he strongly urges him not to allow the Duke to escape him. "Do not let him loose, now that God has so wonderfully allowed you to overcome his wickedness and tyranny. There is no hope of his ever becoming better, any more than there is that the Cardinal of Mayence will ever improve." Having warned the Elector against committing the sin of a wrathful spirit in this matter, he again adds, "But I would not advise you to give the Duke his liberty; he has forfeited all confidence; God has thrown him into your hands: who would be so bold as to set him free till there have been true signs of penitence seen, and God himself is satisfied?"—*Sämmtliche Schriften*, t. xvii. p. 1758-9.

alone, but equally to hope and charity. Bucer rejoined, that five years had already passed away since the article on justification was drawn up in the former colloquy at Ratisbonne, and that he regarded that portion of the controversy between the two parties as finally settled. This statement was warmly contradicted by a Carmelite monk, who denied that any agreement had ever been arrived at on the subject. Malvenda, on resuming the argument, summed up his view of the question in these three positions : first, that good works prepare and dispose a man for justification ; secondly, that charity is the form of justification ; and thirdly, that the works of justified persons perfect justification, and merit eternal life.

The report that war was at hand became, in the meanwhile, louder every day. Charles had awakened a spirit of universal suspicion ; and the meeting of the council at Trent involved questions for the Protestants, which, answered or unanswered, only tended to increase the general uneasiness. The Landgrave, ever ready to take the lead when the aid of his sword might be required, determined on seeking information from those best qualified, though not perhaps the most willing, to give him satisfaction. Addressing Granvelle, therefore, he plainly asked him whether the Emperor and the Pope were, as it had been reported, preparing to support the council by force of arms. The tidings that such was the case had not reached them, he said, through the channels of vulgar surmise, but were brought by officers and generals, men who had boasted that they were already engaged for the campaign.

To these inquiries Granvelle replied, that the Emperor had not entered into a treaty with the Pope, and that there was no truth in what had been said respecting the levying of troops or engaging of generals. "It ought not, however," added the cautious minister, "to create any surprise, if the Emperor should call out an army, considering the state of things, for the defence of his dominions. The report that he was about to lead ten thousand men into Ratisbonne was," he said, "too absurd to be for a moment credited ; yet, should he be inclined

to do so," was the next remark, "there would be nothing in it which might not be defended both by example and argument."

The character of Granvelle had too large a portion of honesty in its composition to allow of our charging him with direct falsehood in his explicit statements that the Emperor had made no hostile preparations. We must therefore conclude, either that the minister was not wholly in the confidence of Charles, or that the reports alluded to were really without foundation; but to whichever conclusion we come, it is plain that the present state of Germany foreboded the most melancholy events, and that their approach could only be retarded by the cautious and paternal interference of those who were guided by higher motives than either personal fear or personal ambition.

The colloquy at Ratisbonne produced no other results than what might have been expected from the present temper of the parties.\* While the one struggled to gain the advantage by a change in the arrangements of the meeting, or by the appointment of new and additional officers, the others saw it necessary to defend themselves by wholly opposing its proceedings. So long as a chance remained that religious freedom might derive any advantage from discussion, the reformers never shrank from appearing at the tribunal of their adversaries. It was their constant wish to be heard; nor could it be said, with any show of justice, that they employed either force or artifice to secure a victory. But so many proofs had now been given of the inutility of disputing, where power and intolerance were the respondents, that the wiser members of the party began to shrink from any further colloquies. While this was the case in regard to meetings nearer home, there were reasons of a new and stronger kind to deter them from attending the

\* The partiality of the Emperor was never more suspected than on this occasion, when he appointed Pflug to be the president of the colloquy. It is a curious circumstance that no prince had attended the late Diet till after the arrival of the Emperor, the business being carried on solely by deputies. This may be accounted for by the state of affairs, and it furnishes very strong presumptive evidence of the anxiety which had taken possession of the various courts interested in the present juncture.—Sleidan, t. ii., liv. XVI., p. 281.



council now assembled. Their resolution being taken with respect to every meeting in which the Pope should pretend to authority, they looked jealously on the present proceedings, as leading directly to the objects contemplated in the plans of the Roman court.

Freed from attendance on the colloquy at Ratisbonne, the protestant leaders were able to employ their thoughts exclusively on the means to be taken for overcoming the influence of the new council. This was a subject fraught with difficulty. The Emperor had insisted on the legality and authority of the council. The whole of Christendom, with the exception of the yet small section which had submitted to reform, either acknowledged its claims to implicit obedience, or looked on with a passive recognition of its right to settle the controversy. It required, therefore, no small portion of moral force, or of conscious rectitude, to support the reformers in their first efforts to resist such an assembly. They had raised the standard against the Roman Church; and, in order to do this, they were obliged to oppose the notion of its universality, and to prove the reasonableness of their opposition by an appeal from Rome to the world. But a general council had pretensions to catholic authority, which rested on different foundations. The arguments employed against the claims of the Roman Church might, with a very little modification, be brought to support the demands of the council; and while many resisted the former, because of its haughty invasions of Christian liberty, they would be equally ready to quarrel with those who threw obstacles in the way of their common champion. There can be little doubt that this was the case to a much larger extent than is usually supposed. The Protestants had considered the subject with the caution which is peculiar to a party interested; but the rest of the Christian world, viewing the proceedings at a distance, and contented with the popular notion of a representative assembly, would regard the protest of the reformers as indicative of pride and obstinacy. To obviate the prejudices thus created, and at the same time to resist the banded powers of the Pope and the Emperor, called for

the most vigorous exertions. At no period had the antagonist parties approached so near each other in the contest, and never were there more causes of stern hostility. Circumstances had occurred to promote, for the moment, a fiercer irritation, a louder, hotter outpouring of wrath. But the personalities of the quarrel had now for some time been lost in the profounder interests of nations and mankind at large. The several parties concerned in the dispute had been taught to feel that generations to come would be affected by their struggles; and that though they might formerly, in some respects, have willingly compromised opinion, and yielded privileges, or drawn back from proud positions, it would at present be in vain for them to pause; the stream of thought and inquiry, to which they had given force, driving on now with a headlong current, which would obey no rule or calculation of expediency.

The Council of Trent gave a new aspect to affairs, but not so much by its direct influence as by the necessity which it imposed on parties to take a distinct and permanent position. Protestantism had done that which the Church of Rome, in the plenitude of its power, and its unwillingness to promote inquiry, had ever refused or neglected to do. The reformers, bold and honest, commenced their course with an open declaration of opinion, with a full and clear statement of every thing which they believed. If they were wrong, the world was put in possession of their case. They said nothing in secret, availed themselves of no subterfuge, sought no shelter in the ever-varying interpretations of scholasticism. The Confession of Augsburg was the first which had been made by Christians since the heresies of the old world had obliged believers to encircle themselves with such defences against the progress of error. Its importance was not confined to the period which gave it birth, or to the people which adopted it as their rule of faith. To the Confession of Augsburg the Christian world has been largely indebted for the direct inquiries which have since been made into evangelical doctrine; and, strange as it may seem, to the influence of the same Confession may the Church

of Rome ascribe the better state of its scientific theology, the improvement of its clergy in matters of precise divinity, and its possession of a standard of belief to which its scholars and its people may confidently refer.

It is remarkable that the period which was distinguished by events so important to the Protestants, should have been that which closed the career of their great and revered leader. Luther, though robust in frame, and capable of enduring the heaviest labour, had suffered from early years the attacks of acute disease. The intense occupation of his mind, his anxious care for the prosperity of the Church, and the continual excitements which thence arose, rendered him every year more susceptible to these inroads of disease; and the strong expressions with which his letters abound, are the audible sighs of a mighty spirit yielding unwillingly to the force of agony. Had his course been one of security and peace,\* it would yet have exhibited those wonders which mark the progress only of the best and noblest of our kind. Germany, with a loving gratitude, willingly ascribes to him the moulding of her language into the forms which manly sense and sublime thought rejoice to find ready for their purposes. The first great original thinker, for many centuries, that dared to think for mankind at large, and might venture, both from the sterling worth of his reasonings, and the end for which he wrote, to address the world, Luther cast aside the trammels of artificial scholarship, and ventured to try the worth of all he did by its application to the general necessity. Were this the only proof of his greatness, it would be sufficient to place him in the highest rank of noble minds. But it was not by any sudden pouring out of thought that Luther won the admiration of his countrymen, or performed the task which now renders him dear to the world. He made discoveries, but he made them as one who, discovering where gold is hid-

\* "It was Luther's fate," observes his latest biographer, "to be obliged throughout his life, like the Israelites under Nehemiah, to bear the sword while he carried on the building of the temple. His various trials and difficulties ended only with his life."—Pfizer: *Luther's Leben*, p. 770.



den, has to dig deep down into the earth before the treasure can be all brought to light. The labour of Luther as a preacher and expositor was one of the grandest tests of the sincerity of his profession, and of the power of his mind. To the Bible he had pointed from the beginning as the source of the knowledge which made him despise the errors of Rome, and by the Bible he remained till death terminated his course. Patient and meditative in all that concerned the Word of God, he was willing to remain as a child, gathering light according as the Divine Spirit might be pleased to bestow it. The preacher who held forth the gospel as the bread of life had first fed upon it himself, and knew experimentally that it was endowed with strength-giving virtue. A devout examination of the whole system of revelation was the safeguard of Luther personally; and the feeling which prompted him to give a permanent form to his meditations, gave him the highest claim to the veneration of his followers. Protestants thence became more distinguished for the love of truth—pure, simple, direct scriptural truth—than for names or systems. An impulse was given to inquiry, which has never ceased; and had it always been under the influence which characterized its first advances, the homes of Protestants, as well as their creeds and churches, would have shone with the light of knowledge and spiritual religion.

The mind of Luther was originally constituted to receive and retain whatever is best calculated to strengthen the powers of thought. It seized with an eager and tenacious grasp the fragments of antient wisdom which lay scattered around at its first outset upon the paths of inquiry. The more precious treasures of Christian tradition, hitherto sought but for purposes of ostentation, and squandered, almost as soon as found, in wanton and wasteful controversy, were viewed by Luther with the admiration of a man who knows the value of wealth, but knows also that its worth depends on the wisdom with which it is used. A student in scholastic divinity, a devout follower of Augustine, versed in the traditional rules of asceticism, and applying to his mind and

conscience the whole force of the educational system to which he was thus subjected, the Church of Rome never sent from its schools a pupil that did more honour to its discipline. It was when his character had been placed under the strong compressive power, first of its scholastic and then of its monastical institutions, that he became a student of the Bible. The effects of early education may be traced in many points of his character, and often in the tone of his writings. However we may lament the corruptions which existed in the times of Luther's youth, it would be unjust to deny that there were circumstances in the scholastic discipline of the Church of that period to which minds of the highest order might acknowledge themselves indebted. It was a discipline which taught men to be earnest in their calling, and kept pretension from raising its head above real worth and genius. Erroneous as were some of the principles which it inculcated as of prime importance, it yet fixed deep in the heart many of the rules most essential to the successful pursuit of study. Were a minute inquiry to be made into this matter, it would be found that the deficiencies of the old system consisted almost solely in the want of biblical knowledge; and that had it possessed this great requisite to solid instruction, it would have produced a long succession of those mighty men who graced, both in Germany and England, the earlier annals of protestant literature. Luther was prepared for the study of the Bible by retirement: his mind had learnt in the cell of the Augustine convent to practise self-examination; and, surrounded by the religious associations of such a retreat, while his thoughts were quickened, though his questionings were not answered, by strange minglings of philosophy and theology, he every day became better acquainted with his wants, and gathered strength in the strivings of his soul for clearer illumination.

A new era was begun in the life of Luther when he commenced the study of the Scriptures. But his character was already formed; and he sat down to the perusal of the sacred volume with a mind and heart the chief feature of which was intense earnestness. Nothing that could

be of importance to the glory of God, or the salvation of men's souls, lost any part of its worth when measured by his feelings of responsibility. He discovered in the Bible first the confirmation of whatever was valuable in the principles of his earlier studies, and then the means of knowledge and power for all mankind ; a new foundation, as it were, for the whole structure of society, and the blessings which truth offers, with open hand, to every creature that is capable of receiving intelligence from heaven. Luther felt, in his own case, that the Bible was a discovery ; and, with the instinctive sense of duty which belongs to minds like his, with the grandeur of self-devotion that mingles, without confounding itself, with the desire of happiness, he had no sooner learnt the value of the Bible in his own case, than he resolved to make it the means of regenerating mankind. From this period his life became an offering to the Christian Church ; and he adopted maxims as his rule of conduct which would have made him a reformer had indulgences never been preached, or had the Church of Rome offered no provocatives to the direct exercise of his zeal. The character of Luther was not formed on the principles which lead a man to take pleasure in agitation. He delighted in the steady contemplation of truth, and at no period exhibited volatility of thought, but passed slowly and with difficulty from one grade of opinion to another. It was not with theories that he had to do. His highest flights of speculation still left him holding fast by the written Word. He loved the holy of holies rather than the pinnacle of the temple. But this superiority to excitement gave weight to every argument which convinced him of truth ; and, the path of duty once marked out, there was nothing to entice him to leave it for others which might seem more promising. The Scriptures, to such a man, are strong nourishment. The nerves and sinews of his whole being, moral and spiritual, were strung to the healthiest action by native truth. Placed thereby in the fittest state for performing the sublime functions of a minister of God, he was not dependent on opportunity, or rather did not owe more to the particular occasion which brought



him before the world, than may be ascribed to any point of time at which a noble and divinely prepared mind begins its career of usefulness.

Luther, from the first to the last of his efforts in the cause of holiness and Christian liberty, acted with as much real humility as determination, with as much caution as courage. He did not appeal from the Church of Rome to himself,—from the opinions of the world to his own spirit,—but from the Church of Rome and the world to the accredited sources of light, and the plainest rules of Scripture interpretation. It was the violence of his enemies, and not any turbulent movement of his own mind or feelings, that agitated the current along which he was borne. He had to communicate intelligence; to reprove manifest vice and injustice; to call his fellow men to the pure worship of their Saviour; and provide the means of future safety for those who listened to his admonitions. And these things he was to do under whatever circumstances he might be placed. He had received the gifts of wisdom, and of an upright heart, as the basis on which to form sublime determinations; and as he lived in times when the opposition to holiness was fortified by all the powers of the world, he received, as a further qualification for his office, the strength of an indomitable spirit, that he might be resolved in action as he was firm and convinced in mind.

The personal character of Luther had doubtless its imperfections, and these are apparent not only to those who judge him with the severity of enemies, but to those who most admire his powers of mind and holy devotedness to the cause of God. It would be a violation of the truth of history to deny this. But at the same time we ought to allow, that if the benefactors of our race, the highly endowed and faithful advocates of the gospel, are not to be put beyond the reach of charity, Luther may claim indulgence for the defects of his character and temper. Among these drawbacks to the spiritual perfection or consistency of his course, the intemperance of his opposition, when his own feelings only were concerned, occupies a conspicuous place.

The language which he employed in controversy was frequently such as admits of no justification. We may plead that he wrote under the strong excitement of a mind indignant at the sight of tyranny and falsehood; but this apology can serve no further use than as it may be proved that the resentment was such as is stated, and that the language used was chosen as the best adapted to express this just and righteous feeling. Now, in religious controversies, and, in short, in all disputes where opinion is the main object of examination, there is, primarily, no cause for the harsh expression of any personal feeling; but when it is supposed that the views disputed are cherished only for unworthy motives, and the spirit of virtue burns with holy zeal against both the error and the fraud, a passion somewhat akin to personal resentment takes possession of the mind, and it ceases at once from employing the mere language of argument and science. But here, again, a distinction is to be made between the indignant language of offended virtue, and the hot, fierce abuse of individual wrath. We fear that Luther may be convicted of having frequently used the latter, when the former would have so much better become the cause in which he laboured; and that he sometimes yielded to the suggestions of personal feeling when he had no right whatever to leave the open and well-defined passages of simple controversy.

While Luther attacked his declared opponents with so much of occasional intemperance, he erred in a scarcely less degree by his unwillingness to admit those to his friendship who richly merited his respect. The mixture of haughtiness and obstinacy with which he rejected the overtures of Zuingli and the Swiss divines, affords a strong proof of the natural tendency of his character to intolerant pride; and we fear, that so far as Luther was in his own self, and merely personally, concerned, had he been endowed with as much authority as the Roman Pontiff, Christian liberty would have gained less by the change than is ordinarily supposed. But it was not on Luther's self that Luther ever wished

the gospel, or its establishment, to depend. His principles nullified the imperfections of his personal character. He might repeat a thousand times "The master has said," but it could avail little when the test of obedience to which he put his disciples was their readiness to examine laboriously all the sources of divine intelligence.

But whatever weight may be ascribed to these deficiencies in the spirituality of Luther, he still stands pre-eminently forth among the grandest of the sons of men. Without pretending that "his failings leaned to virtue's side," they were certainly not those of a calculating selfishness; while his virtues, great and numerous, fought the good fight of humanity and truth with a perseverance which seemed to blend the patience of a missionary with the ardour of a martyr. The soundness of his principles, the purity of his intentions and of his conscience, were now about to be put to the last proof to which they could be submitted. For many years his health had been in so uncertain a state, that he considered himself continually standing on the brink of eternity; and so little did he shrink from the prospect of a speedy dissolution, that his observations on the subject breathed the spirit and feeling of the Apostle, "I desire to depart and be with the Lord," "I long for death," said he, when affairs seemed to promise tranquillity to the Church, "and I believe and hope it is not far off." But he was spared to do and to suffer many things after this. Near ten years subsequent to the above expression of his hope respecting the near approach of death, he still speaks of it as a blessing to be looked for. "I know," he says, "that I am nothing. Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me, that I may be happily delivered from this body of sin and death." "The pitcher," he says, in another place, "has often been brought to the fountain, and will at length be broken. I have lived long enough. God grant me a happy hour, that this foul pillar, this vile worm-bag, may be gathered to its kindred beneath the earth." Again: "I have had enough of the world,



and the world has had enough of me. We are ready, therefore, to separate, as a traveller is prepared to leave an inn when he has satisfied his wants."

It was the happy lot of this wonderful man to have his affectionate spirit comforted by spending the last moments of earthly life amid the scenes of early youth. The Counts of Mansfeld honoured him both for his integrity and his judgment; and a dispute having long existed between them and their subjects, they called him to Eisleben, at the beginning of 1546, to assist them in making arrangements for the settlement of the quarrel. To effect this was one of the objects nearest his heart. "I should lay myself in the coffin," said he, "with joy, could I but see my dear lords of one mind and heart."

His sons and Justus Jonas accompanied him on the journey to Eisleben. The winter rains and snows had so swollen the torrents that they were delayed three days on their route. Luther, with his wonted humour, observed on this circumstance to Jonas, "Dear Doctor Jonas, would not the devil think himself a lucky fellow could he now sink Doctor Martinus and his three sons in the river?" He was received by the Counts of Mansfeld with marks of the highest respect, a guard of a hundred and thirteen horsemen being appointed to attend him at the entrance of their domain. The three weeks which he spent at Eisleben were fully occupied; and though he was now in a state of health which plainly indicated the speedy termination of his career, he laboured in the business of his mission with the earnestness which had ever characterized his exertions. To his sorrow, he was able to effect nothing of importance towards the removal of the cause of dispute, but he rejoiced in the opportunity afforded him of preaching the word of God to many who thirsted to hear it, in these parts. He also ordained two priests, and twice celebrated the Communion. The letters which passed between him and his wife during his absence on this journey, afford a pleasing and pathetic proof of their mutual affection. "Thou wilt still be full of care and anxiety," says he, in one of these letters,

“still doubt thy God, even as if he were not Almighty, or could not create ten Doctors Martinus, were the old worn-out one laid in his grave.” But it appears from the same letters, that this was among the most laborious seasons of his life. “Leave me,” he says, “to one who can take better care of me than thou canst,—than all the angels can: leave me to Him who lies in the manger, and hangs upon the breast of the virgin, yet sits at the right hand of God the Almighty Father. Be comforted with this. Amen. I think that hell, and the whole world, must now be emptied of all the devils, which, perhaps on my account only, are at present assembled in Eisleben. Here are Jews by fifties in one house. Pray, pray, pray for us, and help us, that we may be able to settle this miserable and difficult affair.” The titles with which he addresses his wife show how much he valued her affection, while he thus reproved her anxiety. “We thank you greatly for the care you have of us, and which prevents your sleeping. Since the time you have been thus solicitous for our safety, a fire had well nigh burnt us to death in the inn; and yesterday, without doubt it all happened so from the force of your care for us, a huge stone fell upon our head, and was broken to pieces as if it had been caught in a mousetrap. I am afraid, however, that with all thy care the earth might gape, and the elements tumble about our ears. Let it be thy first object, then, to pray, and leave it to God to be careful for us.”

At the moment of writing thus he was comparatively free from pain; but, with a feeling which strongly characterized his nature, amid all its bolder features, he tenderly exclaims, “Would that I were at home!” The signs of his disorder became daily more alarming, and he began to converse familiarly with his friends respecting the great change which he saw approaching. “Could I but succeed,” he said, “in quieting the disputes which exist here, I should go home with joy, and gladly lie down in my coffin, and give my body to the worms.” He made these remarks on the 17th of February, and partook of his dinner, as usual, among the friends who

entertained him. But towards evening he experienced a heavy oppression on his chest, and the precarious state in which he had so long lived rendered the symptoms sufficiently alarming. He would not, however, allow the pains he suffered to prevent his appearing among his friends at supper time. Attended by his children and the numerous party who delighted in listening to his conversation, and showing their deep reverence for his character, he continued for some time to speak with his usual mixture of gravity and liveliness. The subject of death was one on which he was everready to converse, and he seemed now to be anxious to make it familiar to the thoughts of his hearers. Endeavouring to impress them with the feeling, which he himself entertained, that he had enjoyed a comparatively long life, he remarked, "It is highly probable that when one child of a year old dies, a thousand or two thousand die at the same moment; but when an old man of sixty-three, like me, dies, scarce sixty or a hundred, perhaps, of equal age, depart with him. For men do not live to grow old as they once did." A question having been put, Whether the happy in heaven know each other? he observed, "When Adam awoke out of sleep, he did not ask Eve, whom he had never seen, Who art thou? or, Whence art thou? but he said, "This is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh." But how did he know that that woman had not sprung out of the rock? Because, truly, he was full of the Holy Spirit, and had a true knowledge of God. Restored to this knowledge, and to the divine image, in another life, by Christ, we shall be perfectly renewed, and shall know our parents and each other personally."

The application of fomentations had, in some degree, abated the pain, but after supper it returned with increased violence, and the sufferer was obliged to be assisted to a couch. The application of warm cloths was again resorted to, and, trusting that the pain might be alleviated by these means, Luther refused to allow a physician to be summoned to his assistance. He at length fell into a doze, and slumbered for near two hours and a half. During this time he was sedulously watched by Justus Jonas, his sons, and the friends



at whose house he lodged. About ten o'clock he awoke, and was then conveyed to bed. A little after midnight, he exclaimed, "Oh God! how I am suffering, Dr. Jonas, in my breast. I shall surely die at Eisleben where I was born." Jonas replied, "Reverend Father, God, our heavenly Father in Christ, whom you have preached, will bring us help."\* After this he rose, and walked for some time up and down the parlour where a fire had been lit again at his request. Two physicians were then sent for, and on their arrival some medicine was administered, but Luther exclaimed, "This cold sweat is the forerunner of death," and then began to pray, "O heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God of all consolation, I thank thee for that thou hast revealed to me thy blessed Son, in whom I have believed, whom I have confessed, whom I have loved, whom I have glorified, and whom the Pope and the impious multitude persecute and dishonour. I beseech thee, O Lord, to receive my poor soul. O my heavenly Father, although I be torn from this life, and be stripped of my body, I am assured, nevertheless, that I shall dwell with thee everlastingly, and and that no one shall be able to pluck me out of thine hands." He then repeated three times the words of the Psalmist, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth," and those of our blessed Lord, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."† "But while," says Justus Jonas, "the physicians and we continued to apply whatever remedies seemed best calculated to allay his sufferings, he began gradually to sink into insensibility, and made us no answer, though we spoke very loud and shook him. A brief return of sensibility gave his friends the opportunity of saying to him 'O dearest Father, do you now confess Jesus Christ the Son of God?' A simple word of earnest assent was all he could utter. Death was soon after visible in his countenance. He lay for some time in a state of deep

\* Seekendorf, lib. III., s. 36, p. 636; Sleiden, t. ii., liv. XVI., p. 287.

† John iii., v. 16.

slumber, uttering only now and then a low sigh, and between two and three o'clock in the morning he poured forth his ardent, but deeply penitent and faithful, spirit into the bosom of his God."

Thus did it seem good to the great head of the Church to remove Luther from the conflict before its results could be clearly seen, and when, humanly speaking, he might have appeared to be most needed by his followers. But he had performed the part of the work for which he was raised up, and his removal taught the advocates of the gospel and religious liberty to turn their regards from men, and fix them on the sole author of all power, and on the eternal principles of pure truth, rather than on any human exposition, however generally correspondent with its dictates. This lesson, though obvious to the few who best understood the leading features of the Reformation, was neglected, or soon forgotten, by the multitude. "Call no man master," is a precept of vast importance to the Church of Christ, but it is one of those which religious professors seem, by common consent, to have expunged from their copies of the gospel. By an easy but injurious error, the precept, when remembered, has been allowed to apply to those only whose authority is resisted. "Call not the Roman Pontiff master, is a direction," says the Protestant, "both just and evangelical;" but call not Luther, Calvin or Arminius master, or assume not their names, so as to make the dividing of Christ's body an open scandal to the unconverted world,—and the precept then is without force, or may be set aside by reasons which, if correct, would equally nullify many other of the most valuable of our Lord's instructions. The name of Luther was made the sign of orthodoxy; his opinions and expositions were referred to as a sufficient authority for the adoption of a vast variety of tenets which ought to have been looked for in the oracles of God; and while a new foundation was thus taken, which, closely assimilating with the gospel, was not the gospel itself, the seeds were sown of future disputes, which tended, in great measure, to undo the work for which Luther had been raised up, and which had prospered under his hand, be-

cause he would acknowledge no man for his master but Jesus Christ, and no code of laws and doctrines but that which the gospel gives. His death, happening when it did, left the friends of the Reformation the all-important responsibility of contending, as a second Luther, that is, as the preachers of divine truth, against the pride and errors of a corrupted church. How they performed their work will be seen in the subsequent pages of this history. The period was one of equal danger and importance. On the one side Scylla, on the other Charybdis. Protestantism was every day in greater peril of becoming an engine of power and worldliness, under new modifications. In the hands of princes and polemics the Bible itself may lose its efficacy; in the Council of Trent it was to be sealed.

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## CHAP. V.

PROGRESS OF THE ANABAPTISTS—AFFAIRS OF MUNSTER—  
JOHN OF LEYDEN—MENNO SIMONIS—SUFFERINGS OF  
THE ANABAPTISTS—THEIR CHARACTER.

WHILE the main current of events was thus moving on with uncontrollable force, smaller and dependent streams made themselves visible from time to time, and were then either lost in the enlarging flood, or swallowed up by the quicksands which they in vain endeavoured to pass. The most melancholy of the occurrences which throw a shade over the glorious struggle of the German reformers were those which attended the rise and progress of the Anabaptists. This sect seemed to gather strength from defeat, or rather it had laid the foundations of its errors so deep in the prepared soil of fanaticism, that the attempts made to overcome it never reached the origin of the evil. Munzer having lost his life in the decisive struggle of 1525, left an inheritance of burning zeal and error to many successive leaders of his dispersed followers. A name has in this, as in most



other instances of religious controversy, led to fatal consequences. In some cases truth has been sacrificed to the credit of a term, and in others it has been supported only for the sake of the appellation. In some, the use of a name has blinded the majority of mankind to the importance of principles the most beneficial; and in others it has led to the condemnation of the just with the unjust, and of the confounding of that which is innocent in speculation, and not morally hurtful in practice, with that which is destructive of all that society most anxiously wishes to preserve. Infant baptism had been disputed long before the period when it was decried by the followers of Munzer. As a matter bearing intimately upon the doctrines of the gospel, it was one on which inquiring minds might exercise themselves without fairly incurring the charge of either infidelity or heresy. But if this were the case at any time, it did not cease to be so when the fierce and bewildered peasants of Germany chose to draw from it the watchword of their armies. The forgetfulness of the principle, that a religious opinion, counted innocent at one period, can never in itself become the fit subject of punishment, has, in all ages, led to the perpetration of much injustice. Unless antiquity can be proved to have erred in its tolerant spirit, or the opinion can be proved to have changed its character, the mere profession of such a doctrine can only be made a badge of infamy by the most daring violation of reason and human rights.

But it is the misfortune of kings and powerful assemblies to be often placed in situations where the most careful investigation of a question is required, but where neither time nor the agitated passions of men will allow of its being examined. Such was the case with Charles V., and the diets, which made adult baptism a capital crime. The overthrow of civil society, and fatal injuries to religion, were threatened by those who called themselves Anabaptists. But large numbers appear to have disputed the validity of infant baptism, who had nothing else in common with them, yet who, for that one circumstance, were overwhelmed with the obloquy and the punishments richly due to a fanaticism, equally

fraudulent and licentious. A general order was issued in 1528, that all who administered a second baptism, or allowed themselves to be re-baptised, should be punished by the civil power.\* In the diet held at Spire the following year, it was decreed that every one who was proved guilty of either of the above offences should be put to death. By this law many suffered the most grievous afflictions, who could be charged with nothing more than professing erroneous opinions. But while the cruelty of this sweeping condemnation is so manifest to all right-judging minds, it was of little use for the effecting of the main object contemplated in the decree. The number of the Anabaptists continued to increase, and the furious spirit which inspired them became more untameable than ever. Their blood ran in streams from the scaffolds; and so many perished in this manner, that it was supposed the heresy would soon cease to exist.† Nothing could more plainly prove the folly of persecution than this fact. It is most probable that the majority of those who died by the executioner were deeply convinced of the truth of their creed. We lament the progress of their fanaticism, but we rejoice in the manifestation which they gave of what the heart and spirit of man can bear in the defence of that which is believed to be divine.‡

The intermixture of fraud and profligacy, with the seeming earnestness of zeal for a pure faith, enabled the leaders of the Anabaptists to gather into their ranks a promiscuous multitude, characterized by all the dis-

\* Ottius: *Annales Anabap.* Bas. 1672, p. 45.

† Two martyrologies have been published by the sect; the one at Haarlem, in 1615; the other at Horn, in 1617. But these works did little good to its cause, the party which published that at Horn accusing the martyrology of Haarlem as a most unfair work; to this, the other party replied, by reviling the book for which exclusive credit was claimed, as containing the names of many who were neither martyrs nor Anabaptists.

‡ “Atque utinam,” says the eloquent and amiable George Cassander, “qui atrociores in hosce miseros sunt animo, mansuetudinem et prudentiam hujus sancti viri (Augustin) imitentur, qui in disputatione adversus Manichæos (in quorum falso dogmate multos annos rabiosus et cæcus, ut ipse loquitur, erravit) his verbis usus: ‘Illi,’ inquit, ‘in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt cum quanta difficultate sanetur oculus interioris hominis, ut possit intueri solem suum. Illi in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt quibus suspiriis et gemitibus fiat, ut ex quantalacunque parte possit intelligi Deus.’”—Cassandri Opera, p. 672.

positions which give force to popular rage. A leader only was needed to bestow a momentary consistency on their movements; and rarely has a leader long been wanted, when a vast army of enthusiasts or malecontents stands ready to obey his word. Bernard Rotman, a preacher at the church of St. Maurice, near Munster, was the first man of any reputation who had ventured to ally himself with the party as a regular instructor. Munster had a cathedral, and rich establishments for its catholic clergy: but the progress of the Reformation in Saxony was gradually rendering the inhabitants less satisfied with their teachers, and more anxious to partake of the benefits enjoyed by their neighbours. The evangelical preaching of Rotman contributed greatly to increase this disposition; and, after a short but fierce struggle, the pulpits of the city were demanded for, and given up to, the Protestants. Things would now have soon presented the same aspect as in other places, where the struggle had terminated in favour of the new opinions; but scarcely had tranquillity been restored, when a party of Anabaptists, under John of Leyden, a tailor by trade, began to make itself conspicuous in the town, and to disturb the comfort which the people were receiving from the simple teaching of the gospel. A sincere and vigorous effort was made, on the part of the Protestants in general, to put down the intruders; but their numbers continued to increase, and their influence over the least instructed of the inhabitants was soon discovered by a thousand signs of intemperance and licentiousness. Rotman, whose error had remained unsuspected, now openly declared himself an enemy to the baptism of infants, which he condemned as impious and execrable. By the influence of one of the protestant clergy, the senate was induced to renew a decree, passed a short time before, but disregarded, which obliged the Anabaptists immediately to leave the town. This order was only seemingly obeyed. The inhabitants were too much inclined to listen to the fervid discourses of the new preachers, to shut their doors against them when they needed shelter. Instead, therefore, of leaving the city or its neighbourhood, the more powerful of the



sect secreted themselves in the retreats prepared for them, and, from time to time, appeared among their followers, gaining no small addition to their influence by the danger which they seemed to incur by this their zealous affection.

It was not long that they found it necessary to act with even an appearance of secrecy or timidity. Their influence on the minds of the people was become so great, that the authorized preachers encountered many perils in their attempt to restore tranquillity. The streets resounded with their incoherent clamours; and one enthusiast, imitating fanatics of an older date, ran about the town continually exclaiming, "Repent, and be re-baptised, or the wrath of God will speedily overwhelm you!" Terrified by these awful words, many of the people hastened to the supposed shelter from the consequences of their sins; and, as if the water of purification had a maddening quality in it, they had scarcely received the rite, when they took up the burden of the same wild announcement, and made the whole neighbourhood ring with their cries.

The next step in the progress of this melancholy conflict of fanaticism with common sense, and of impure error against the grace of the gospel, still more plainly indicated the nature of the principles adopted by the Anabaptists of Munster. Not satisfied with their triumph over the opinions of the more sober of the people, they now proposed to put to death every one who refused to acknowledge the necessity of a second baptism, thus showing how near akin are fanaticism and tyranny, and of how little consequence it is to the enemy of souls, and of mankind at large, whether absolute despotism or licentious freedom enjoy predominance in the world. Not wholly unprepared for such a menace, the peaceable inhabitants of Munster hastened to a quarter of the town which afforded them ready means of defence; and the fanatics were at length obliged to agree that every one should be allowed to profess what doctrines he pleased. But the calm lasted only a few days. The civil authorities had either fled, or hopelessly resigned their power into the hands of the Anabaptist chiefs. In

a short time nothing remained to oppose the madness of the multitude; and now property of every kind became a prey to their rapacity, and the church of St. Maurice, with all the buildings in its neighbourhood, was reduced to a heap of ashes. The cathedral and other churches shared almost the same fate, being stripped of their ornaments and threatened with destruction at the next rising of the malecontents.

Every passion which could minister arms to an infuriated people was now at its height. The ruling impulse was zeal, a zeal which had all the fervour and fierceness which usually belongs to it, but more of the selfishness than is to be found in its ordinary operations. To zeal were added pride, rapacity, licentiousness, each and all of which looked for their hour of riotous indulgence. That hour was soon to arrive. No authority existed in Munster which had the least chance of resisting the popular madness. The success of one day, on the part of the prophets, prepared for that of the next. To eyes dazzled by the fires of enthusiasm no object is seen in its proper place, and every passing shadow assumes a gigantic form. Events produced by a new species of violence altogether blind the understanding of rude minds. Whatever was unexpected is accounted miraculous, and under the broad shield of the miracle, which the insane impulses of the people themselves have wrought, their leaders and betrayers successfully attack the bulwarks of liberty and truth.\*

\* Luther had no slight reason to tremble at the proceedings of these people, it having been on the expression in his early treatise on Christian Liberty that they pretended to found their conduct. "A christian man is master of every thing, and subject to no one," were his words. He took ample care, in future writings, to show that he did not use them as the fanatics would have wished. "The followers of Munzer," said he, "imitate the papists, and would neither have nor give peace. They do every thing in fury; allow no means or prayers to avail, but off with the heads of their adversaries. Their doctrine is kept from examination, and while they extol it as the truth, they endeavour to stifle all other. How very differently did our princes and lords act at Augsburg; nor can we be charged with having made war or insurrection for either God or the world."—Warning to his beloved Germans.

Guicciardini ascribes the origin of the sect to Carlostad, who, he says, after having for some time followed Luther, was at last led by ambition to make laws of his own, and then to preach, not only against the Pope, but against his former master.—Comment. lib. I., p. 25.

Others have ascribed it to Zuingle; but it is evident that neither the one nor the other had any thing to do with it.—Ottii An. p. 3.

The bishop of Munster, aided by the Landgrave and other princes, at length surrounded the city, and commenced a regular siege. Unterrified at this, one of the prophets, who bore the name of Matthew, issued an order, commanding the people to bring whatever they possessed to a common treasury which he had opened for the purpose. Disobedience to this order was to be punished by death, and, wrought on at the same time by terror and religious infatuation, the unfortunate inhabitants gave both their money and their goods into the hands of their rapacious teachers. This complete surrender of property was followed by a similar one of books. The Bible alone, said the prophet, was needed for men's comfort or instruction, all others, therefore, ought to be committed to the fire, and to the fire they were committed.

Soon after this, the death of Matthew, who was killed by a soldier employed in the siege, made way for the promotion of the celebrated John of Leyden,\* who exceeded all his predecessors in pride, zeal, folly and sensuality. Having begun his career by marrying the widow of the late prophet, and appointing Knipperdoling, one of the most distinguished of his associates, to the office of executioner, he forthwith took measures for organizing his government. His means and ability were both put to immediate trial. The bishop pressed the siege with fresh vigour, and, from the number of the force employed, and the regular forms of military attack, there seemed little reason to doubt the speedy discomfiture of the party assailed. But such was the energy with which the fanatics were inspired, and such the acuteness of their leader, that the assailants were continually repulsed, and the bishop found himself obliged to apply for more adequate assistance from the neighbouring princes.

A trance of three days enabled John of Leyden to mature his plans, and when he chose to rise from his supposed sleep, he pretended to bring with him from heaven instructions and commands divine as those com-

\* The proper name of this man was Bockhold, and he was by trade a tailor; his predecessor, Matthew, was a baker of Haarlem. "Knipperdoling," says Spanheim, "was an old innovator, ready to his hands, and made on purpose for tumults."—*England's Warning by Germany's Woe*, p. 15; London, 1646.



municated to Moses in the mount. Acting by the light thus bestowed, he named twelve persons as the heads of the new republic, which was to own God only, like that of the Israelites, as supreme ruler. His next procedure was a more startling one. Marriage, he asserted, was no longer to confine a man to one woman, and he proved the authority of the new law by at once taking three wives to himself. Blinded as were the people and their teachers, this was a trial of their faith in the prophet, for which they were scarcely prepared. Some of the doctors ventured to dispute the holiness of such a practice. The more simple of the multitude also uttered aloud their sentiments of disgust, and even rushed upon the deceivers with the determination of expelling them from the city. But this resistance came too late. They were repulsed by the more numerous bands who looked forward with eager delight to the reign of licentiousness. About fifty of the unfortunate people fell beneath the weapons of the infuriated prophet, and his companion. The slaughter did not cease with the first outbreak of rage, but murder thenceforth became one of the recognized chiefs in the kingdom of John of Leyden.

It was evident that so daring a line of conduct required for its success the rapid increase of fanaticism on the part of the people. The original measure of zeal might be sufficient to feed the flame, when it first burst forth, but it must soon have been extinguished by the consumption of its fuel, had not means been employed to supply it with continual nourishment. Another prophet, therefore, now appeared on the stage, and the object of his mission was to proclaim John of Leyden, in the name of God, the rightful successor to the throne of David, and the ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. With impious hardihood that impostor no sooner heard the words pronounced, than he fell on his knees, and raising his hands to heaven, exclaimed, "Yes, my brethren, I have already had this revealed to me; but I waited till the Father should make it known to you by some other of his ministers."

The minds of the people were now in a state which rendered any plan of deception easy. Their hopes and

safety depended, indeed, for the present, on their being able to believe any thing. Reason, when once banished, must not be allowed to make occasional visits to her former territory, lest she suddenly bring despair and every other element of destruction in her train. The prophets of Munster had been received from the first as endowed with divine authority and wisdom. Every thing was possible after this; and it would have been easier for the people to reject them at the expense of a conflict for life, than to continue faithful to their first belief, and resist their subsequent pretensions. It requires, in fact, much less credulity at any time to give credit to the most violent assertions which follow the first step in the precipitous path of fanaticism, than is necessary to make men believe what in the outline is not worthy of belief. Once break through the principles of right reason, and the road of folly is open to an unlimited extent.\*

John of Leyden now presented himself to the multitude, clothed in the robes, and surrounded by all the pomps, of royalty. A crown of gold graced his brows; the sceptre was assumed, in indication of a sovereignty as unlimited as his presumption; and he bore a sword, as emblematical of the power and justice which he, in reality, contradicted by every action he performed. Seated upon a throne in the centre of the city, he invited the people to make their complaints before him; and had the art to repress, while thus acting the judge, the dangerous familiarity of his nearest associates. Knipperdoling himself was committed to prison for three days; and the people soon learnt to perceive that in

\* Cassander, who had many opportunities of observing the character of the Anabaptists, was always anxious to soften the severity with which they were judged, both by the princes and the theologians of his times. Unlike Spanheim, he conceived that when the infirmity of the human mind might be regarded as the cause of an error, the error ought not to be visited with condign punishment. But he was even willing to allow the existence of an ardent religious feeling in the minds of many of the Anabaptists. "In quibus," says he, "magna ex parte, pii cujusdam animi argumenta cernas, qui imperito quodam zelo incitati, errore potius quam animi malitia à vero divinarum literarum sensu, et concordi totius ecclesiæ consensu desciverunt . . . . quo fit, ut qui hujusmodi sunt, commiseratione potius et emendatione quam insectatione et perditione digni videantur."—Opera, p. 1039, Par. 1616.

this, as in other similar cases, the unlimited freedom of the mass, and the licentiousness of the rulers who pretend to give them that freedom, are generally as much opposed, as even virtue and vice.

The next proceeding of the monarch exhibited an equal degree of sound policy and daring. Well aware that a small isolated town, however devoted to his cause, could not long support his designs, he made a solemn feast, giving it the form of a communion, and then, in the presence of all the people, appointed twenty-eight doctors to go as missionaries into the four quarters of the world and proclaim the newly-established kingdom of holiness and freedom. There was no want of volunteers for this mission. Men of weak minds and sincere zeal have always been found ready to attend the call of imposture, when cloaking itself with the pretences of holiness. Imposture, however bold and cunning, could not do its own work completely. It needs the aid of truth and sincerity; and it is this which so often renders it difficult to pass judgment on those who have been drawn into the vortex of fanaticism. Fraud has plunged them into the abyss of error; and they have been there prepared to do worse and more ferocious deeds than fraud, conscious of its own weakness, dare attempt without their aid. The emissaries of John of Leyden acted up to the letter of their instruction. In every town which they entered, the people and the magistrates were startled with a summons to throw aside the deadly sins in which they were living, and adopt at once the divine law of the new kingdom. According to the direction of their master, the missionaries, when rejected, cast down a piece of gold, and formally devoted the reprobate city to destruction.\* To the inquiries made respecting their doctrines, they replied, that four chief prophets had been sent into the world, of which two were false, and two true: the former were the Pope and Luther; but Luther was especially a lying prophet; the latter were King David and John of Leyden, in whose name they preached. Wonder and curiosity softened,

\* Sleidan, Guicciardini Comment., lib. I, p. 26. Ottius, Annales, p. 65.



at first, the indignation which arose in the minds of rational men at hearing these monstrous absurdities; but patience was soon exhausted, and the miserable fanatics were submitted to various species of torture, to oblige them either to retract their assertions, or promise for the future to keep silence. Their resolution was unconquerable. They bore their sufferings with a determination, which proved how well John of Leyden\* knew their character, when he chose them for his emissaries. Death at length came to their relief; and but one of the twenty-eight escaped the fate which they provoked rather by the seditious than the religious errors of their system.

While these vain efforts were being made to excite the neighbouring districts to take part with the people of Munster, that unfortunate city was exposed to all the miseries of a close blockade. The bishop having succeeded in gaining assistance from his allies, a considerable body of forces assembled under the walls; and the inhabitants soon saw themselves reduced to a state of famine. Dreading the consequences of their despair, the King appointed twelve of his most faithful attendants to watch at the head of the guards, and prevent desertion. Things continued in this state to the beginning of the year 1535, when scarcely a vestige of food of any kind remained to the people. But John of Leyden had learnt the privileges, as well as the arts and the cares, which pertain to tyranny; though the inhabitants at large were literally perishing with hunger, he found means to feast himself and his three consorts every day on the most luxurious viands. The people, driven to madness, no longer regarded any restraints on appetite; not only were dogs and cats devoured, but children, even, are said to have fallen victims to the hunger of phrensied mothers. Horror penetrated every

\* This extraordinary man evinced, by his insight into character, his fitness to undertake far better designs than those in which he engaged; but without this quality, neither he, nor others still better known in history, could ever have obtained even a momentary footing in the world. To have ruled as he did, he must have been to a great degree what he is described, "*Homo acutus, eloquens, modicæ lectionis versutus, audax, ingenio contentioso, attamen ad simulandum et dissimulandum quidlibet prompto.*"—Gerdesii Hist., t. iii., p. 95; s. xxxiii.

heart but that of John of Leyden; those even who surrounded him shrunk with terror from the spectacle of his selfish devotion to enjoyment, while his followers were perishing. This feeling so strongly impressed one of his queens, that she could not refrain from reproving him for his cruelty. Enraged at her rebukes, preparations were made, by his order, for her immediate execution; and she was publicly put to death in the presence of the other queens. The execution was followed by dancing, and the famished people were exhorted to join in a song of thanksgiving for the downfall of an offender against the majesty of John of Leyden.\*

In the midst of the confusion and suffering which reigned on all sides, the rulers of Munster could find courage to draw up more than one defence of their doctrines, and of the principles on which they proceeded. The kings and judges of the earth were, in these publications, devoted to destruction; the only exception being in favour of the Landgrave, who, it was said, might be expected to join the Anabaptists as soon as their cause was triumphant. To these addresses the Landgrave directed his theologians to return such a reply as they thought becoming. Luther contemplated the whole of the proceedings with deep affliction and anxiety; and the Christian world at large trembled, lest the triumph of error and fanaticism might keep back, for many years, the growth of rational piety. Licentiousness of the grossest kind was dignified with the title of marriage; property was confiscated, by one sweeping sentence, to the rapacity of the fierce usurper, and he only needed sufficient power to make a stand on some wider and more open stage than Munster furnished, to plunge society into inconceivable confusion.

\* Sleidan, t. i, liv. X. p. 423; an instance is recorded, almost too horrible to be related, which strikingly illustrates the sufferings of the people, and the consequences of a fanaticism which sets law at defiance. The writer says, he forgets by whom the fact was related, but he remembers having read that the wife of a senator "*Cum trium liberorum mater facta esset, eos omnes occiderit, sale condierit, et comederit.*"—Gerdes, t. iii., p. 104, s. xxxv.; Ottius, *Annales*, p. 74.

The condition of the people became every day more horrible. Despair had opened their eyes; and the famishing children seemed, with their dying sobs, to curse the wretched folly of their parents. John of Leyden saw all this, but feeling, as it seems, that retreat was now impossible, he resolved to stand out to the last, enjoying, as he best might, his short-lived pomp, and offering to his victims the only return he could give, that is, stronger and, if possible, more deadly draughts of delusion. The season of Easter was at hand; and as soon, he said, as that festival dawned, his followers should reap the full reward of all their toils and sorrows. To give greater force to this assurance, he traversed the city mounted on a blind ass, and, exhibiting all the signs of an afflicted penitent, proclaimed that the sins of the people were laid upon his head, and that he was thus expiating their iniquities.

Wonderful to be said, though Easter passed away without bringing the promised relief, the King still possessed sufficient power over the people to make them reject every offer sent to them by Count Oberstein, the general of the besieging army. The last notice given the city was communicated on the 22d of June, when two of the inhabitants, who had escaped the watch, made known in what way the town might be taken. This address proving of no avail, preparations were made for an assault; and a little before midnight, on the 24th, a band, consisting of five hundred men, approached the walls. One of the gates was already open to receive them; but the alarm had been given, and the main body of the troops was obliged to retreat. The few left behind succeeded, by a desperate effort, in fighting their way to another of the gates, and, opening this, they were soon rejoined by their comrades. After a fierce conflict of little more than an hour, the fanatics were completely subdued. Rotman, plunging into the thick of the enemy, died covered with wounds; but both the King and Knipperdoling were taken alive, and reserved for a more dreadful end. After having been led about from place to place, till the month of January



1536, they were tried at Munster, before the Bishop of that city, the Archbishop of Cologne, and the deputies of the Duke of Cleves. Two days were employed in endeavours to persuade the wretched men to confess the criminality of their proceedings.\* John of Leyden alone relented; and, acknowledging his wickedness, prayed for mercy through the merits of the Mediator. He was then tied to a stake prepared for the purpose; two executioners, armed with burning pincers, immediately began their work, and the miserable sufferer, having endured for almost an hour the rending of his body, at length expired, being mercifully run through by a sword. The execution of his companions followed; and their mangled remains were hung up in three cages in the market-place of Munster, a disgusting spectacle, but less calculated to fill the mind with horror than the gloating love of revenge which, under the form of justice, seems to have inspired the judges which doomed them to so horrible a death.†

The alarm excited by the proceeding at Munster contributed greatly to increase the rage of the enemies of the Reformation. Men whose passions and prejudices are too strong to allow them to discriminate, rarely pause with the punishment of the guilty, or think they have done enough by simply providing against danger. The Protestants found themselves treated with fresh rigour at every outbreak of the Anabaptists; and many were confounded with that sect, and suffered the most grievous oppression, who had almost as little in common with them as the Church of Rome itself.‡ But in spite of the severe laws passed in almost every diet against the

\* With John of Leyden and Knipperdoling was also taken a preacher, named Crechting. Sleidan does not mention him in the account of the taking of the city, but speaks of three being executed.—Gerdes, t. iii., s. xxxv., p. 105.

† Sleidan, t. i, liv. X., p. 430. This author says that John of Leyden bore without a murmur the first three blows of the executioner, but that he afterwards ceased not to cry for mercy. Gerdesius quotes a writer, who, he says, was an eye-witness of the execution, and who states, that neither the one nor the other of the sufferers emitted any sound of lamentation.—Ottius, Annales, p. 85.

‡ When Satan had by this means endeavoured, not only to make schisms in the reviving church, and to cast dust in her face, but likewise to render

Anabaptists, and the readiness displayed in their execution by the various states in which they were found, Germany, the Low Countries, and Switzerland, still teemed with increasing numbers of the sect. In most cases the only offence which could be charged against them was an assertion of superior sanctity, a claim to perfect freedom in the exercise of their spiritual functions, and a denial of the efficacy of any external rites to effect the objects for which they were ordinarily employed. Melancthon, during a brief absence from Wittenberg, on account of the pestilence which raged there in 1535, met with a party of the sect in the neighbourhood of Jena. It consisted of about seventeen persons, most of whom were strangers to the country. On being apprehended, and questioned as to their doctrine, they stated that adults needed to be re-baptized, and that three drops of water sprinkled on the head would suffice; that the Scriptures were written on their hearts by the Holy Spirit; and that they were prepared to follow the example of Christ, to the enduring even of death upon the cross. Imitating the first professors of the gospel, they called each other by the most endearing terms of friendship and kindred; nor does there appear to have been any thing in the conduct of these poor people which could justify their being treated with violence. Happily for them, Melancthon was employed to reason with them on their opinions; and his Christian mildness, it is probable, contributed still more than his arguments to convince them of the danger of many of the opinions which they unfolded to him in their interviews. Others, however, of a sterner character appeared soon after in the same neighbourhood, and were put to the same test. They stated in their confession that children need not baptism, seeing they have not sinned; for that that which is commonly called original

the reformation of the temple of the Lord odious to the powers of the world, as if thereby the just authority of princes over their subjects was abrogated, and the new preaching of the gospel led only to faction and sedition, it cannot be expressed into how much hatred the most holy work of reformation was brought with those men who were still addicted to their former superstitions; for these tumults were not only imputed to their true authors, a few leaders of factious persons, but likewise began to be laid to the gospel itself, and all the teachers thereof.—Spanheim, p. 6.

sin is only an innate infirmity which does not become sin till the will and the reason consent to its motions. To this was added, that Christians ought not to become magistrates, or to use the sword, for that there is no need of rulers among the worshippers of Christ, except the ministers of his word. They condemned, moreover, the general notions respecting property, and urged the necessity of instituting the system of a community of goods, as required by the nature of the Christian Church ; and when spoken to respecting marriage, they justified the separations which had taken place among them, on the plea, that no believer ought to remain united to an unbeliever.

Arguments were in vain addressed to these unfortunate men. They resisted every effort to convince them of their error, and this resistance was accompanied with signs of a determination to abide firm to the last, which made them equally feared and hated by those whom they opposed. After an imprisonment of some months, therefore, they were condemned to death by the sentence of the Wittenberg lawyers, who proved them guilty, on the plea, that they had resisted the edict passed in 1529, and the general orders of the Elector. So far, however, was the latter from following up the consequences of his opinions, that he reproved the decision of the judges with no small degree of severity, and in this respect followed the example of the Landgrave, who, more consistently with the principles of the Reformation, had, from the beginning, declaimed against the notion that any man ought to be punished by the magistrate for his religious faith.\*

The wildest of human conceits will find support in

\* Seckendorf, lib. III., sec. 13, xli. ad. Cassander relates, in letters to his friends, that he was on several occasions employed, but without success, in endeavouring to persuade Anabaptists to recant, when in prison. He describes one of these unfortunate persons as a man, "*zelo quodam Dei impulsus*," but destitute of true knowledge: as altogether different to the fanatics of Munster, his mildness and placid conduct obtaining general admiration, but obstinately resisting reason. Another he describes as a man sufficiently confident, and more fit to contradict and assert, than to solve objections or understand arguments drawn from scripture. "More than sixty," he says, "were taken one night in a cellar, to which they had resorted for the purpose of hearing, preaching and praying."—Opera, p. 1203–8.



the minds of honest enthusiasts, when they originate in systems regarded as profitable and holy. John of Leyden had been proved guilty of the most awful series of frauds, yet he did not want a successor. John of Battenburg, a bold but less corrupt impostor, asserted his right to continue the rule established by John, and for some years strove hard to multiply the evils which had originated in the state of Munster. But the union which doctrine gives is one thing: the union of purpose is another; and while only the former was required to secure the continuance of the Anabaptists as a sect, the latter was needed to carry into effect the daring conceptions of such men as John of Leyden, or his follower, John of Battenburg. The idea of empire gradually vanished away. It had never, probably, obtained even the momentary regard of many who otherwise favoured the opinions of the Anabaptists. The sect, therefore, as a religious body, ought to be viewed independently of the fatal proceedings of the people of Munster, and its history traced as that of an important division of the record of human opinion.

Among the many who aspired at different times to the dignity of leader in the ranks of these people, the most distinguished for ability and moderation was Menno Simonis. This remarkable man was a native of Friesland; and, having been educated for the priesthood in the Romish Church, became in due time one of the curates of the little town of Pinningen. He was here associated with men who were not ignorant of scripture, but he feared, it is said, to read it himself, lest he might be corrupted thereby, and so led to embrace false doctrine. This very dread, however, indicated a state of mind almost the reverse of that in which either truth, bigotry, or error would wish to find us. Menno, accordingly, when he was performing mass, often felt himself borne along by a current of thought which he would fain have resisted, as the inspiration of the devil. He questioned the real presence of Christ, in spite of himself; and, attributing these doubts to wickedness or infirmity, instead of to a pious anxiety respecting the means of grace, he suffered for some time the severest conflicts

of mind. To free himself from the anguish which he endured, he had recourse to the pleasures of the table, and frequently endeavoured to lose in the excitement of play, the torments of religious uncertainty. At length, in a happy moment, he was induced to take up the New Testament. He could not be in a worse state than that in which he seemed destined to be left by ignorance. Knowledge was now his only resource. The word of God alone could give the certainty which he sought. A very inferior degree of intelligence will satisfy a mind that has never suffered from doubt; but nothing less than the best and fullest proofs can give repose to one which has long had to endure the anxieties of scepticism.

The progress of Menno was rapid, and attended with many consolations. He now began to delight in the work of the ministry; and his discourses became imbued with the blessed spirit to which his heart seemed to owe its increasing peace. The next step in his history affords another illustration of what has been so often said respecting the folly of trusting to persecution as a cure for error. Having heard that some one had been put to death because he was found guilty of being re-baptized, he straightway turned his attention to the subject of infant baptism. As scripture was now his sole dependence, he became involved in fresh difficulties, when he saw that the New Testament made no mention of the subject, and that the right of baptizing children depended on inference rather than on direct assertion. It is to be recollected that he began the consideration of this matter under the most distressing impressions. The question was not merely whether infant baptism was authorized by scripture, but whether for doubting its efficacy a man could justly be subjected to the death of a felon. An answer to the latter part of the inquiry can be difficult to those only who are blinded by pride and sensuality. Menno, in coming to a rapid conclusion on the subject viewed in this light, soon embraced the whole doctrine of anabaptism in his answer; and thenceforward became one of the most powerful and consistent of its advocates. Free from the fanaticism which affected the

other leaders of the sect, he lamented with the deepest sorrow the conduct whereby they degraded their profession. The horrible excesses of the people of Munster aroused him to employ all his energies in deprecating the union of human conceits with what was regarded as the purest doctrine of scripture. As he had been promoted to a benefice since he began to inquire into the subject, he was enabled to speak from the pulpit on all the points which so greatly interested his mind.

But, however satisfied he felt that the licentious followers of John of Leyden could not be inspired by any principle of evangelical religion, he was not the less affected at the recital of the sufferings and martyrdoms which made up so large a portion of the history of the sect. It could not be doubted that many of its members died solely to witness their love of Christ and his gospel. He reproached himself bitterly for wanting the zeal and devotedness which distinguished these believers so faithful to their cause. The more he preached, the more uneasy he felt at beholding the corruptions of the church to which he belonged. In this stage of his progress he suffered in the same manner as he had done at the beginning. His constant prayer, therefore, was, that God would come to his aid, and, by the all-powerful workings of the Holy Ghost, thoroughly cleanse and change his heart. The object of his supplications was gained. He acquired new resolution every day. He learnt to calculate consequences with a less timid mind. The duty which he owed to Jesus Christ soon presented itself to him as the only consideration worthy of intense thought; and in this manner he at last arrived at a state in which he could readily resign himself and all his affairs into the hands of God. He accordingly, in the year 1536, quitted his benefice, and thus, he said, made his escape from Babylon.\* The following year, a party of Anabaptists, who bore the character of pious, humble men, intreated him to become their pastor. In assenting to their earnest desire, he declared that he would not take upon him this office, as one of the Munster

\* Ottius, *Annales*, p. 84.



fanatics, or of any other sect whose principles were contrary to peace and holiness, but as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ and the gospel, whose whole object it was to promote the salvation of all men, and to bear the cross.\* Impressed with all these feelings, Menno began and pursued his ministry as one who knew no other rule of action but that of an entire devotion both of body and soul to the cross of the Saviour. The line which he pursued involved him in none of the infamous extravagances of others of his sect; yet he did not escape persecution, or effect his object without encountering the sufferings and privations of a life spent amid enemies. When delivered from the more direct perils of persecution, he often nearly sunk for want of food and shelter. These, his trials, were in after years shared with a wife and children whom he tenderly loved. But he exhibited the fervour of his zeal, and the consistency of his professions, by persevering amid all these difficulties in preaching the gospel. Nor was he without consolation. He never repented leaving the church in which he had been educated, nor the prospects of preferment that it spread before him, to become a poor and itinerant minister of Jesus Christ. In this state of mind he was preserved not only by the piety of his disposition, but by the success which, under all discouragements, attended his labours. Many of the most licentious and abandoned of mankind were awakened, by his earnest addresses, to a sense of their condition. Others, whose power and riches seemed to present an effectual obstacle to his approach, heard with attention the fervent appeals which fell from his mouth. Thus, little as he had reason to hope for success, and destitute as he was of earthly comforts, he in reality passed both a useful and a happy life; for the peculiarities of his system were lost in the earnestness with which he pressed upon the hitherto cold and ignorant the vital doctrines of the gospel, and the

\* "Six, seven or eight good men," Menno said, "came to him in the year 1537, and entreated him, with tears, to take upon himself the feeding of the flock. These persons were free," he said, "not only from the errors of the Munster fanatics, but from all other errors and heresies."—Ottius, *Annales*, p. 93.

essential rules of spiritual conduct; and as he had, from the first, given himself up to the service of God, he had sufficient cause for congratulation when he found that the work, to no small extent, flourished in his hand. In the progress of his labours he visited various parts of Germany, Holland and the Low Countries. All the influence which he gained was devoted to the purpose of bringing the erring and divided Anabaptists into such a union as might enable them to resist for the future the deceits of fanatics and impostures. Though strongly contending for the chief article in the creed of the sect, he boldly resisted the notions respecting the immediate coming of Christ's personal reign. He was equally opposed to the licentious attempt to legalize a plurality of wives; and thus took from the multitudes who had so readily adopted the suggestions of the Munster prophets, the bait that was to lure them to destruction.\*

The followers of Menno, therefore, assumed a character very different to that which had hitherto attached to the great body of Anabaptists. They became the founders of a sect which soon lost all traces of its birth amid scenes of singular fierce delusion and unbridled vice. Menno himself lived to the year 1561, and at the time of his death saw a fair promise of this fruit of his labour. He was not the only man of learning and respectability who had joined the Anabaptists in the earlier stages of their career. His appointment as one of their ministers was owing to Ubbo Emmius, himself formerly a priest, and distinguished for his knowledge of the classical languages. Ubbo, having joined the sect in 1534, allowed himself to be ordained one of its bishops; but the proceedings at Munster filled him with disgust; and he at once separated himself, with a considerable body of followers, from the degraded enthusiasts. He continued for many years to teach his people the principal doctrines of the sect; but, convinced, at last, that he had fallen into error, he renounced, with expressions of the deepest sorrow and humiliation, all his claims to the

\* Ottius, *Annales*, p. 62.

power and illumination on which he had so long insisted.\*

Menno had, therefore, to struggle alone against the difficulties which beset his party; and these were, in no slight degree, increased by the continued attempts of men of the most violent disposition to revive the horrors of Munster. John of Battenburg, who united to the influences of a noble descent the power which belongs to an ardent and fearless mind, was disposed to carry on the designs of John of Leyden; and, notwithstanding the miserable fate of that wretched fanatic, expressed his conviction that the kingdom which he had founded was the kingdom of holiness and of Christ. United with John of Battenburg in enthusiasm, but contrasted as to rank by the lowness of his birth and fortune, was David George, who, the son of a mountebank, and long engaged himself in the occupation of his father, was suddenly separated from all his old associations and pursuits to take part in a work the most awfully contrasted of every other with his former calling. On joining the Anabaptists, he exhibited those qualities of mind which are best calculated to secure the sympathy of vast bodies of men, waiting eagerly to be excited, but only barely willing to be instructed. He could address them in the language most intelligible to their understanding, because he was acquainted with none superior to their own. He could reason with them so as to convince and determine, for he had arrived at conviction himself by the movements of mind and conscience which wait not for proofs or arguments, but obey the first impulse of passion, and continue in full action, like a revolving wheel, till the spring itself is worn out. This extraor-

\* *Ea Ubbonis Palinodia legitur in ejus confessione, quæ Amsterodami, anno 1609, ea ejus autographo est edita, ubi circa finem, "dolere se," ait, "ex animo, quod aliquem ad istud munus promovisset, in quo tam miserè deceptus ipse sit, et quod non antea destiterit, sed eò adactus etiam fuerit, ut ad postulatam fratrum, Theodoro Philippi, Davidi Georgii, et Mennoni Simonis, idem munus imposuerit; quod me valdè pœnitet, inquit, et fratribus meis deplorabo, quoad vixero, istiusque semper reminiscar. Et cum illis valedicerem Mennonem ac Theodorum monui, missionem meam iniquam, meque in eo circumventum fuisse, ac optare, ut nunquam hoc munus acceperissent; saltem exonerare coram illis conscientiam visum, culpam et seductionem agnoscendo, de cætero videant quid agant."*—Gerdes, t. iii., s. xxxviii., p. 114; Ottius, p. 94.



dinary man, for extraordinary he was, however deplorable his errors, readily bore the sufferings which it was the lot of his party to endure. In the year 1528 he was publicly whipped; and, his tongue having been bored through, he was banished for six years. This by no means diminished his zeal. He continued to preach with increased earnestness, and, in the course of his labours, converted his own mother, who, with a zeal equalling his own, some time after died by the public executioner. The examination of truth by a mind greatly excited, and badly prepared, is little likely to end in the love of wisdom. If the intellect be weak, error and enthusiasm are the common results; if strong, bold, resolute, presumptuous dogmatism, which cares for nothing, either in morals or religion, but its own success. David George was made a bishop by the prophets of Munster, but finding his conduct the subject of general complaint, he determined on forming a party of his own, and accordingly wrote a book, in which he set forth his wild, crude notions with equal confidence and fierceness. East Friesland was the principal scene of his labours, but he at length became so obnoxious to the hatred of all parties, that he found himself compelled to flee for his life. He, therefore, changed his name to John von Bruck, and made his way to Basil, where he contrived to deceive the people sufficiently to secure himself an ample maintenance, his errors and deceptions remaining undiscovered till after his death, which occurred in 1556.

Melchior Hoffman was another of those who distinguished themselves as leaders of the different parties of Anabaptists. He had followed the trade of a furrier, but, possessing the gift of popular eloquence, and inflamed with the wildest fires of fanaticism, he soon succeeded in winning the favour of the multitude. Lower Saxony and Westphalia were chiefly agitated by the excitement which he occasioned. At length he confined himself to Strasburg, where his furious preaching brought upon him the resentment of the magistrates, and he was cast into prison. But the privations he en-

\* Ottius, *Annales*, p. 106.

dured there in nowise diminished his fervour. He had proclaimed Strasburg to be the New Jerusalem, and he now assured his followers that he should speedily come forth from his dungeon at the head of one hundred and forty thousand sealed ones, who, having broken the bars drawn against him, would smite the earth with a curse, and establish the kingdom of Christ. He died, however, in prison, and his followers had to support themselves under their disappointment by some of those inventions common to times of general delusion.

While the heads of the sect were thus labouring with various success, the great body of the people stood exposed to the bitterest shafts of persecution. The martyrologies of Haarlem and Horn recount particularly the numbers of those who suffered in successive years. According to the former, ninety-six fell in 1547. The latter names one hundred and four. About the same number perished in each of the three following years; but in 1551, when the Diet of Augsburg passed another decree against the sect, one hundred and twenty-five suffered, according to the martyrology of Haarlem, and according to that of Horn one hundred and sixty-one.\*

It was not till a late period that this sect obtained attention in England. In the year 1549, we find the venerable Hooper speaking of it to Bullinger, as giving no small annoyance to the more judicious preachers of the Reformation. "The harvest," says he, "is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Pitying the ignorance of the people, I read publicly twice a day, and to so crowded an audience, that the church can scarcely contain it. Thither, too, come the Anabaptists, who give me much trouble concerning the incarnation of Christ. Although I am not able to satisfy their pertinacity, the Lord is pleased to close their mouths by His word, and the people detest their heresy more and more. I would that we had you and Walter with us six months, and I think we could convert many hearts."† The lamentations of Hooper were those of a tender and affectionate spirit; but the Anabaptists of England shared with their brethren on the continent the persecutions which Pro-

\* Spanheim, p. 19.

† Ottius, *Annales*, p. 111.

testants as well as Catholics inflicted on the sect. Their subsequent fate belongs to a later portion of our narrative. England has happily never been long favourable to licentious error; and Anabaptism, whatever might be its character when first planted here, soon wore so mild an aspect that it was found to be impossible to subject its professors to punishment without violating every principle of justice and religious toleration.

In Switzerland, on the contrary, the struggle between the predominant party and the Anabaptists was continued for a considerable period, with all the wrathfulness of the original conflict. At first sight we are disposed to express surprise at the spectacle thus presented to us. Of all places in the world, the newly reformed cantons of Switzerland would be those, we should have suspected, where sects of every kind might most readily obtain the free exercise of their worship. But our surprise vanishes when we recollect that true liberty is far more opposed to licentiousness than tyranny is opposed to it; and that the reformers had every where more reason to hate and shrink from the corruptions of the Anabaptists, than had the members of a church which thought more of its authority and its ceremonies than of the weightier matters of the law. The extreme jealousy, therefore, with which the heads of the Swiss cantons viewed the Anabaptists, may be accounted for on general principles, and those the most honourable to religion. But the spirit of the age was scarcely pure and sedate enough to allow of the belief that the Anabaptists of Switzerland were always treated with strict regard to justice. They were troublesome and dangerous, and in the character of their tenets error exhibited itself in its worst forms. This was sufficient to authorize even the freest states in those days to draw the sword as soon as argument had failed. In Berne and Zurich laws were passed which compelled the sectaries either to leave their homes or cease from turbulence. Thus far the magistrates did but consult the safety of the people, supposing the Anabaptists be fairly represented by the chroniclers of the times. But Anabaptism itself seems afterwards



to have been made a crime, and was punished with scourging, confiscation of goods, and, in some cases, with loss of life. Here we begin to find an assumption of authority which, if it can ever be lawful in itself, has rarely or never been used lawfully. The object of law is conduct, not opinion; and whenever this is forgotten, tyranny of the worst description overthrows the bulwarks of society. In the case, therefore, of the Anabaptists, the enactment of decrees for their particular punishment does not appear consistent with general equity; for the crimes which they might commit were already provided against by the common law of the land, unless those crimes were of a nature which the all-seeing God only knows how to punish with perfect equity. If Anabaptists committed theft, murder, treason, or any other offence, they might be dealt with as other criminals; and if their opinions were of such an evil nature that they tended to bring them more frequently than other people into the commission of crime, they would necessarily be the greatest sufferers; and had the law simply and majestically proceeded in its course, making no new and questionable pretensions to dominion over men's consciences, exciting no suspicions of partiality, and recognizing no distinctions but those with which it is concerned, it would doubtlessly have been able to perform its functions, and to secure thereby the peace and well-being of the state. It would be the height of folly to pretend that the Anabaptists ought to have been left unpunished when they committed crimes, because they acted under the influence of religious enthusiasm, or madness; but it is equally unjust to conclude, that, because they were Anabaptists, they deserved to be treated with greater severity than other criminals.

But it was not till a later period than that at which we are arrived, that the laws were passed to which we allude. The Anabaptists, both in Switzerland and other countries, continued to exhibit the wildest instances of fanaticism, and the most unconquerable determination to suffer rather than to yield, for three quarters of a century. It may be a matter of doubt with thoughtful

and unprejudiced minds, to what cause we ought to attribute the gradual decline of the persecution to which they were so long exposed. On the one hand, the influences of the Reformation diffused generally a milder spirit, and a clearer understanding of the rights of conscience; and, on the other, the sect itself lost, in successive trials, much of its original fanaticism, till it at length retained nothing but its speculative opinions on baptism, as a distinction from the rest of the Christian Church. The progress of these opinions will more properly occupy our attention when we come to review the effects of the Reformation in its maturer stages. Enough has been said to place the Anabaptists in their proper position before the reader, as one of the parts of the great body of mankind most deeply engaged and interested in the struggles of the sixteenth century. They are to be regarded as hated equally by Catholics and Protestants: as having nothing to wish respecting the success of either, but as being wholly occupied with pressing forward their own schemes, and defending themselves against their numberless and powerful enemies.

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## CHAP. VI.

### STATE OF THE EUROPEAN NATIONS AT THE OPENING OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT—THE REFORMED PARTY IN FRANCE—ENGLAND—SWITZERLAND.

WHEN the Council of Trent was preparing to set in order the articles of a creed which might for ever silence dispute, the most powerful and active of the European states were intensely engaged in considering how they might best secure their own aggrandisement, or the independence of their churches. France and England, next to the protestant states of Germany, presented the most formidable barrier to the designs of Rome. Their disposition greatly affected every part of the controversy; and the history of the Council of

Trent, the most important chapter in the later annals of the Church, can be but imperfectly understood without a constant reference to the temper and proceedings of these powerful nations.

France had enjoyed, from an early period, many opportunities of gaining light and knowledge; the Church frequently manifested a spirit of freedom, which, had it been cultivated, would soon have shaken off the yoke of Rome, and enabled the people to learn the worth of the gospel itself. The rise of the Waldenses was an offer of grace and truth to France. Whatever might be the other tenets of that people, they must universally be acknowledged to have done well for mankind in asserting the worth of the Scriptures above the traditions of a corrupt church, and that of a holy life above the observance of dazzling superstitions. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the opposition to the power of Rome assumed a more formidable character, because proceeding from the throne itself. Julius II. had provoked the jealousy of princes by his ambition, and, by his want of priestly virtues, had opened the eyes of mankind at large to the worst features of the papacy. Louis XII., who was then on the throne of France, resolved to lessen the influence of so dangerous a power by the most vigorous exercise of royal authority. The monarch wanted neither earnestness nor resolution in prosecuting this design. But there was the same fatal hindrance to the success of Louis as to that of every other prince who had simply opposed his own forces to the forces of Rome. It was not by these means, or by any stroke of policy, that a power could be shaken which had penetrated the heart of society, and occupied every avenue of ordinary intelligence. The humbling of the Roman Pontiff took place more than once, but it never produced any permanent, scarcely even any temporary, advantage to the cause of religion. In the long struggle which the emperors carried on with Rome, the successes of the civil power often left the ecclesiastic in a state which threatened it with subjugation; but it does not appear that piety increased in proportion as the terrors



of the Vatican decreased, or that the world grew in knowledge as the grasp of the papacy was relaxed. It was not by the overthrow of the papal throne, but by the diffusion of new light, by the reformation of doctrine, that the world was to be emancipated. The tyranny of Rome would naturally sink under such a purifying of the moral atmosphere; but this would be only one of the general effects of the superior cause; and though many beneficial results might follow from this event itself, yet it could never have produced the same as those which sprung from the main and originating influence.

The quarrel between Louis and the Pope, like those of almost all other princes, had a mere political commencement. Julius II. was indebted to the French monarch for his first successes in the papal government; and, manifesting his gratitude for these early favours, he continued to enjoy the alliance of the King, till his ambition led him into attempts which at once undeceived his virtuous and generous supporter. The refusal of Louis to obey the haughty injunctions of the Pontiff was followed by a decree of excommunication, which gave the dominions of France to any one who might be powerful enough to drive the lawful possessor from his throne. This led to the summoning of a synod of the French clergy at Orleans and Tours,\* and soon after to the calling of the celebrated Council of Pisa,† where Julius, who had in vain prohibited its assembling, was declared contumacious, the author of schism; hardened and incorrigible. The King of France followed up the decree of the council by demonstrations of the most persevering hostility. In answer to the Pope's excommunication, he issued another, excommunicating the Pope; and, not content with this, had medals coined and distributed, on which was the inscription, "Perdam Babylonis nomen."‡

\* Held in September 1510.

† Opened in November 1511.

‡ Fleury, t. viii., Art. I., p. 32. The questions put to the former assembly regarded entirely the temporal policy of princes in respect to the Roman Pontiff. It was asked whether the Pope might lawfully make war against princes not subject to his temporal authority, and when they had committed

But neither France nor any other part of Christendom derived the smallest advantage from these proceedings. On the accession of Leo X., Louis condescended to annul the acts of the Council of Pisa, and give his assent to that of Lateran, which had been summoned by Julius in opposition to the former; and one of the principal articles of which was, that the Pope is superior to councils. The contemplation of this vacillating conduct, on the part of so powerful a monarch as Louis, is sad and discouraging; and we look in vain for the realization of the hopes which must, even at that period, have been awakened in the minds of thoughtful and devout men.\* The only signs of approaching freedom which France still presented were to be found in the conduct of the university of Paris. That institution, though little advanced in the knowledge of pure theology, was a defence against the slavish principles by which it had been the object of the Popes to counteract the spirit of independence. Resolved to act consistently with its principles, when it appeared to be the only safeguard of the Gallican Church, it published, in the year 1517, that is about two years after the accession of Francis I., a formal appeal against the Council of Lateran, and boldly declared, that "the Pontifical Church was altogether depraved, and that it needed universally a solemn reformation, not only in the members, but in the head."

The accession of Francis I. proved as little favourable to the religious as to the political affairs of the kingdom. He was born in times which required a temper almost the reverse of that which it was his pride to cultivate." France needed politicians rather than warriors at this season, and the new monarch, though full of

no offence against the rights or faith of the Church, and without declaration of war. It was answered, "No!" The other questions were put in the same guarded manner. At this period, therefore, no further notion appears to have been entertained than that of securing the freedom of the church and government of France from the oppressive ambition of the Pope. In this respect, the question whether, under certain circumstances, it was lawful for a prince to withdraw his allegiance to the Pope, was of vast extent. Nor was the answer of inferior importance: "Let the Pope be advised to call a general council, and if he refuse, it is then lawful for the King not to obey him."—Artic. Turon. de Spicilegio Kappiano, Ap. Gerdes.

\* Thuani Hist., t. i., lib. I., p. 15.

honourable dispositions, saw no excellence in that which did not assimilate itself to the splendid pageantry of ages which had no light but that which shone on the surface of things. Whatever there is of excellence in the character of a knight, an accomplished gentleman, and a patron of the fine arts, may safely be ascribed to Francis I. But he had for his immediate rivals Charles V., Henry VIII., and the whole circle of Italian politicians, whose Machiavellian maxims were now beginning to exercise that domination which they continued to enjoy, till Divine Providence was pleased, in its mercy, to re-establish the reign of common sense and honesty. Francis had sufficient natural integrity to prepare him for listening to the claim of protestantism with fairness; but his integrity was overgrown with the weeds of superstition, and his courage was rendered useless by its being exercised for no other purpose than that of the attainment of a nominal glory. Neither Charles V., on the contrary, nor his other opponents, ever used any portion of their means or strength, without an immediate and practical object. While Francis, therefore, was the better fitted, by honesty of disposition, to listen to the reformers, Charles was the better calculated to support them; and when both these celebrated princes are numbered among their enemies, we may ascribe the hostility of the one to an imperfect understanding of his duty; and that of the other to a keen, but selfish, and, in the end, miscalculating policy.

France presented so promising a field for nurturing the seeds of the Reformation, when the doctrines of the gospel began again to be preached, that both Luther and Zuingli turned their eyes, with hopeful expectation, to that country as the most likely to produce a sure return for their labour.\* But the very power which

\* The university afforded, at first, the most ready opening to the introduction of reformed doctrine. Francis I. wished to be regarded as a patron of learning; and this brought numerous scholars from Switzerland and Germany, who soon began to diffuse among the students a new spirit of inquiry. "In a little time," says Maimbourg, "the university was filled with strangers, who, because they knew a little Hebrew, and enough of Greek to appear more learned than they really were, acquired reputation, and insinuated themselves into the houses of persons of quality, who, in imitation of the king, made a great account of learned men. They gave



had aided the French clergy in their resistance to the tyranny of the Pope, became, in the sequel, equally inimical to the cause of a real and spiritual reformation. It was the acknowledged law of France that no treatise on any religious subject might be published without the permission of the theological faculty of Paris. This gave to the doctors of the Sorbonne the same power as that arrogated by the Pope; and, it is plain, that it matters little to mankind at large whether the authority which denies them the light of truth, or the privilege of inquiry, resides in a college or in a palace. Thus, in the very year when Luther was preparing to present himself, full armed, before the chiefs of Rome, the university of Paris condemned the booksellers who had ventured to publish a treatise respecting the lawfulness of the marriage of the clergy; and, soon after this, Luther himself was condemned by the same body as guilty of a most impious arrogance, and as one whose wickedness ought to be repressed by bonds, censures and flames, rather than by any attempts at reasoning. In the same furious diatribe, he is compared to the heresiarch, Montanus, to the founder of the Manichees, and other heretics whose names had become proverbs for describing whatever is most base and dangerous. His book, "*De Captivitate Babylonica*," was likened to the Koran;\* and, as that which was most proper to excite the hatred of the people of that age, he was said to have united in his doctrines all the detestable errors of the Bohemians, the Albigenses, and the sects from which they were supposed to be derived.

themselves an insolent liberty in interpreting the Bible in a manner different to the Catholic Church, and interpreted certain passages so as to favour their errors; and the sense they thus gave them they pretended to be conformable to the Greek or Hebrew, which they cited eternally, instead of the Vulgate."—*Histoire du Calvinisme*, p. 10.

\* Nec tamen pestiferam doctrinam evomuisse contentus, librum insuper edidit, si titulo creditur, cui *De Captivitate Babylonica* nomen indidit, usque adeo variis respersum erroribus, ut jure *cum Alchorano* conferri mereatur. In eo siquidem extinctas hæreses et funditus extirpatas, quarum ne vestigia quidem ulla superstabant, super his præsertim quæ ad Sacramenta Ecclesiæ spectant, suscitare, ac in lucem reconvare totis animi viribus contendit. Scriptor quicumque is est, Ecclesiæ minitans Christi hostis perniciosus et antiquarum blasphemiarum instaurator execrandus.—*D'Argentie Collec. Indic. de Novis Error.* t. ii., p. 2.

The effect of these censures on the people at large was that desired. Millions were still to be born, and live and die, without enjoying one ray of the divine light which the sun of righteousness was shedding freely for the awakening of the world. But neither had the sun risen in vain, nor were God's labourers working in vain. The fierceness with which the doctors of the Sorbonne had attacked Luther brought forth an apology from Melancthon, written with equal power of argument and elegance of language. This contributed to increase the excitement already occasioned by the circulation of Luther's own writings; and France could soon boast that some of her citizens were sanctified by the word of righteousness, and prepared to offer themselves as living sacrifices to God. Among the most zealous of these was Louis de Berquin, a nobleman of great accomplishments and acknowledged virtues, and the pious William Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, to whom especially the nation was indebted for the first actual steps towards the reform of doctrine and discipline. Protected and encouraged by him, William Farel, of Dauphiny, Faber, Arnold and Gerard Roussel, of Picardy, all of whom had distinguished themselves in their studies at Paris, began to preach the gospel at Meaux, and to make such alterations in the service of the Church, as seemed to be required by the present condition of the people.

These excellent men were not long allowed to continue their labours in peace. The parliament of Paris being made acquainted with their proceedings, by the active spies of the Church, entered into a strict inquiry respecting the reports which had reached the capital. It was not to be supposed that, begun as the examination was, it would terminate on the side of peace. But, to protect themselves from the charge of injustice, the most active institutors of the proceedings directed commissioners to examine with more particularity into the real circumstances of the case. The report of the persons sent on this mission was sufficiently unfavourable to the reformers. Faber and his associates were said to be found guilty of treason against the majesty of heaven, and the bishop was cited before the King, that

he might answer for his temerity in countenancing the introduction of heresy into his church and diocese. This amiable prelate was distinguished for his mildness of disposition, and the mingled threats and warnings of the King induced him to promise that he would not allow the reformers to remain any longer at Meaux.\* Faber, on finding that he and his fellow-labourers were now marked out as sacrifices to the rage of the priests and monks, prepared for flight. He proceeded first to Blois, and then to Nerac, where he was gladly received by the Queen of Navarre, Margaret of Valois, the only sister of Francis, a woman of great spirit and piety, and to whose conduct the Reformation in France was indebted for its firmest supports. Farel fled into Switzerland, and became a minister of the Church of Geneva; Gerard Roussel followed Faber to Navarre, but it is doubtful whether he in all respects adopted the reformed doctrines; while it is known of his brother, that he made peace with the university, and was endowed with a canonship and other offices of dignity in Paris.†

A fatal blow seemed to have been given to the hopes of the people of Meaux by this sudden loss of their teachers. But where the soil is prepared, God rarely refuses seed; or, when the seed is sown, denies the blessing which is to give it increase. Though no longer allowed to look for preachers of the pure word of God in the cathedral, or open churches of the town, those who still yearned for the bread of life were not to be left destitute or unsatisfied. Such as had listened with only an

\* Maimbourg acknowledges that Briçonnet was a man of merit, and virtuous in his character and conduct. "He was obliged," he says, to "submit to an examination on the subject of the new doctrines; but it is certain," he adds, "that he justified himself from the crime laid to his charge. His memory, however, has suffered, and he needs to be defended against those who believe that he encouraged the new opinions. Having profited by the good advice which was given him, he abandoned these errors. This ought to be a lesson to all bishops never to hold any intercourse with people suspected of dangerous novelties in doctrine."—*Histoire du Calvinisme*, p. 15.

† Gerdesii, t. iv., p. 14; Seckendorf, lib. I., sec. clix.; Beza, t. i., liv. I., p. 5. Varillas, whose authority is little to be depended upon in general, gives an account of Briçonnet and his associates, which agrees, in the main, with that of the protestant historians. He says, that the bishop glowed with such an intense love of learning, that whatever hours he could steal from the cares of his diocese he devoted to study, and that as he could not find at Metz fit companions in his learned inquiries, he invited four scholars into his diocese, little suspecting that those whom he called were infected with heresy.



eager curiosity to the teaching of the reformers, resigned, with little difficulty, the means of knowledge. Curiosity, or the love of novelty, is rarely sufficiently strong to induce men to gratify it at the expense of safety. A large portion, therefore, of those who embrace any system of belief, when first proposed to them, but which is afterwards found to involve them in danger, may always be expected to resign their faith at the first sound of alarm. It is then that the sifting begins; and, afflicting as is the spectacle of human weakness, when divine things are concerned, we have every reason to believe that the early trials of faith have been of infinite service to the Church of Christ. Had it not been for them, there must have been much that is perishable mixed with the first layer on the everlasting foundation.

Among those whom the prospect of danger could not terrify, was John le Clerc, a wool-comber by trade, and who appears to have exercised considerable influence over persons of the same employment. Undaunted by the threats of the court, he affixed a paper to the door of the cathedral, in which he denounced indulgences as an abomination to the gospel and the people of God. On being apprehended, he was condemned to be scourged three successive days in the streets of Paris, and then to be branded on the forehead. His subsequent flight to Metz, and nightly labours in preaching the gospel to the people of that town, afforded noble indications of the power which the evangelical doctrines exercised on his heart. At the end of about a year spent in this manner, he was again apprehended, and ended his days in the flames, the first martyr of the revived religion in France. The example of John le Clerc was soon followed by a young man named Jacob Pavannes, who had also first heard the gospel at Meaux. Fear had induced him to recant, when threatened by the commissioners from Paris with condign punishment. But he enjoyed no peace till he went and openly confessed his error in so doing. He was accordingly condemned to die; and afforded, by the joyfulness with which he endured his sufferings, another instance of the genuineness of his

profession, and of the strong hearts that were to be found in the little community of three hundred that worshipped in the obscure retreats about Meaux.

It soon became evident to the authorities at Paris that the seeds of reformation were scattered far more widely through the kingdom than had at first been apprehended. The books of Luther were in the hands of many; and whispers floated through the university which conveyed, though indefinitely, the most alarming intelligence to jealous listeners. Efforts, therefore, were to be made to counteract the spread of the heresy, which might correspond to the supposed subtlety of the poison. Means were not wanting for this purpose. There were parties in the Church of France who hated as much as Rome the idea of a reformation. This was especially the case with the clergy about the court. They were indebted for their rank and opulence to the system which made confessors necessary, and secured to those who had the greatest command over the minds of the people the readiest access to the highest places in the government. To them an overthrow of the existing system would have been fraught with ruin. The heads of the university, again, were deeply interested in preventing the introduction of new doctrines. They had grown old in the study of scholastic theology, and eminence gained by the subtleties of schools of any kind is not the species of honour which may most easily be sustained through a variety of trials and changing systems. From each of these parties, therefore, a host of champions was ready to go forth on a crusade against the reformers. Nor was their preparation inferior to their rank or numbers. The Church had for ages furnished the state with political advisers, the most celebrated for their acuteness, laboriousness, and fidelity. It would have been hard, it would naturally seem, if the Church, wishing to defend itself by policy, could not have wielded the weapons in its own defence, which it had learned to sharpen for the world. So far as the most experienced policy, therefore, could aid a cause which can only be really promoted by truth and righteousness, that of the French Church was sure to

be furthered by the best and most experienced plans. Argument, moreover, was to be had in as great plenty as policy. The university of Paris had earned its reputation by the skill and boldness with which it had ever been ready to meet controversialists in divinity or theology, from any quarter of the world. It was prepared to answer the challenges of the most profound, or the most sceptical; and, while it thus stood armed at all points itself, it was proud to send forth its sons well qualified to carry on the same warfare in the most distant provinces. But, besides these advocates of the Church as it was, against the proposers of a reformation, there was a third class, whose zeal might be trusted to with still more certainty than that of the others. This consisted of the monastic orders; at the head of which, in the beginning of the controversy, stood the Franciscans, who contemplated with equal fear and hatred the progress of a sect which, from the first, lessened the contributions that had hitherto flowed into their coffers from the piety of the faithful. A set of enemies was thus excited against the reformers, who possessed, in the highest perfection, the arts of secret warfare. They could undermine the best of human structures by efforts invisible to the world; and their rancour was rendered doubly terrible by the freedom of their minds from the ordinary passions that in other men's hearts modify both enmity and friendship.

Such were the foremost of the adversaries which the Reformation had to dread in France. The monarch himself might be numbered among them; but he was too frank and generous to act from mere selfish motives; and the whole of his conduct may be attributed, first to the advice of interested counsellors, and then to the force of necessity. But, amid all the preparations which were thus being made to crush at once the rising spirit of improvement, it continued to develop itself; and every part of the country began to feel the invigorating influences of its breath. Lyons sent forth a preacher in the year 1523, whose sermons made a powerful impression on the surrounding district. This was the celebrated Amadeus Maigret, a member of the order of



preaching friars, a man whose strong and clear understanding appears to have enabled him very early to appreciate the reasonableness of Luther's doctrine. The Archbishop of Lyons soon turned his attention to the proceedings of Maigret; and information being conveyed to the doctors of the Sorbonne, they gathered from his discourses several propositions which were immediately declared heretical. These were, first, that abstinence from flesh in Lent is not a matter of command; that the canons and decretals are traditions of men, and ought not to be regarded; that he is a slanderer and speaks false who says that Luther is a wicked man; and that it is a vain thing to oblige a man to repeat words and sentences of the signification of which he is ignorant. The other propositions referred to the abuse of the antient laws concerning penance and remission, and the power of the Pope; and lastly to the laws respecting the celibacy of the clergy, and the distinction of meats, which Maigret represented as expressly alluded to in the solemn warnings of St. Paul respecting the heresies of the latter times.

It appears from the propositions here stated, that Maigret was chiefly concerned in opposing the more outward abuses of the Roman Church. We read not of his having incurred the charge of heresy for deviating from the received doctrines respecting the sacraments, or justification. It is, however, probable that, as he refused to call Luther unholy, he had adopted generally the opinions of the German reformers. The sequel of his history is wrapped in obscurity; and we have no information concerning his subsequent course, except that he escaped from his pursuers into Germany, where he died; and, as it would seem from the expression of an early writer, by some circumstance which unfairly hastened his dissolution.\*

Francis Lambert of Avignon was another of the early

\* Maigret was regarded by the enemies of the Reformation as a person of no small importance; for it was said by the clergy of Lyons, that if Maigret were punished, and his doctrines properly condemned, the catholic faith would soon be restored to its integrity.—Gerdesii, t. iv., p. 20.

French reformers for whom the Church of Christ was indebted to the monastic orders.\* His father had enjoyed the dignified office of apostolic secretary; and, in his fifteenth year, he was admitted into the order of minor friars. The ingenuousness of his mind speedily led him to detect many of the frauds and errors of the society into which he had been introduced. He contemplated with mingled surprise and disgust the uses to which the sacred name of religion and its hallowed signs were put by the very men who, it was supposed, had left the world, that they might the better glorify its author, and obey its spiritual injunctions.† It was while these feelings were operating on his mind, that he became acquainted with the writings of Luther. They who have contemplated the conjunction of two full and rapid streams, and traced them in their course when thus united, will have an image that may illustrate the progress of minds like those of the early reformers when coming in contact with each other, and then stretching onwards in the same track towards the everlasting and infinite ocean of truth.

Lambert had no sooner become well acquainted with the doctrines of the German reformer, than he commenced the labour of instructing his brethren in the elements of the truth which he had himself so rejoicingly received. He quickly discovered, however, that that which he regarded as the best gift of God was viewed by his companions as fraught with every principle of danger; and that to receive it, would be to cast aside the means of good which had been gained by the wise and politic efforts of successive generations of the

\* Gerdesii, t. iv., p. 23.

† "Soon after I had completed the period of my probation," says Lambert, himself, "my internal being revealed itself, and I then saw how little the internal agreed with the external. I felt that all was confusion; and the more I felt convinced of this, the more sad, afflicting and wearisome was my life. I could obtain no peace of mind. My exercises were performed in sorrow. I was troubled by the persecutions of the impious. At length, called to the healing ministry of the word, I cannot describe how much they tormented me for not preaching according to their wishes. The people heard the word of God, and eagerly received it. They alone, as deaf adders, would not listen to the voice of the Most High."—Schelhorn *Amœrit. Literar.*, t. iv., p. 312.

Church's most devoted advocates. Sentiments of the most painful disappointment attended the continual failure of his pious endeavours to awaken better affections in the hearts of his brethren. Convinced, at length, that no endeavours of his could change their determination to resist the truth, he meditated seeking some province more favourable to his labours. When he found that the very books which he circulated were burnt, and that he was not likely to remain long safe from personal violence, he fled into Switzerland, and afterwards visited Germany, where he studied more fully the doctrines of the Reformation, and published his reasons for leaving the minor friars. During his stay at Wittemberg he formed a close intimacy with Luther; and was admitted to the office of a public teacher. In this capacity he expounded the prophet Hosea, and afterwards published his commentary, with a dedication to the Elector. At Wittemberg, also, he married, and was thus the first of the French ecclesiastics who followed the principles contended for by Maigret. But he was still anxious to see the light of the Reformation diffused in France; and, with this feeling, he made a journey to Metz, where he endeavoured, both by argument and persuasion, to remove the prejudices which existed to the study of the Scriptures. His endeavours proving vain, he went to Strasbourg, and there enjoyed sufficient repose to pursue his study of the prophets. Besides expounding in public the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel, and the Book of Revelations, he composed and published a commentary on Joel. In the midst of these labours he was summoned by the Landgrave of Hesse to assist him in the reformation of his territories; and in 1527 was made the first professor in the new academy of Marbourg. He attended the colloquy of the Swiss and Saxon divines in that city, rather as a hearer, it is said, than a party in the dispute. But his mind, before doubtful on the subject of the sacrament, now firmly embraced the opinions of Zuingli. He appears to have lived only a short time after this; but his memory was cherished among the students of Marbourg as that



of one of the most useful and evangelical of the reformed teachers.\*

The city of Grenoble in Dauphiny was about the same period roused to inquiry by Peter Sebevilla. Zuingle beheld the labours of this preacher with lively interest, and exhorted him, in an epistle full of earnest eloquence, to leave nothing unattempted for the conversion of France. "Christ," says he, "has sounded the trumpet, and calls us to arms against the scribes and pharisees: hypocrites. Who will not arm his right hand for the battle? When the lion roars, says the prophet, who does not fear? And when Christ thunders by His ministers, who of the enemy will not tremble? I should despair indeed if they did not tremble in all their camps. But they are turned about, and are confounded, as if they knew not what counsel they should follow. For, if they have begun to slay the flock of Christ by erring princes, let them fear lest, when the door is opened, they may themselves have to meet the onset. If they attempt to make use of scripture, which they have so basely falsified, they grow cold with terror, and fall to the ground. Why then do we not rush forth against these cowards, supported as we are by that one all-sufficient protector, the Word of God, who will slay Antichrist by the breath of His mouth? If Christ be for us, who can prevail against us? No! as long as God is present with us, though we be brittle as an earthen vessel, no one shall be able to break us. And that He is with us we know from the certain promise of his word, whereby He assures us that He will be with us even unto the end of the world.

\* The works of Lambert are alluded to in his epitaph, which shows how greatly he was esteemed by the scholars of the time:—

"Lambertus claris Gallorum finibus ortus  
 Exul pergratus Martis in urbe fuit.  
 Explicuit sacros studio fervente prophetas,  
 Scripturæ sanctis deditus historiis.  
 Hic evangelicæ doctrinæ summus amator,  
 Hostis Romulei præsulis acer erat.  
 Edidit in Divum sacra commentaria Lucam,  
 De captivo hominis scripsit, et arbitrio.  
 Conjugi tædas sacri laudavit honestas,  
 Polluti thalami probra nefanda notans."

He has therefore commanded us to be steadfast when, for His name's sake, we are brought before kings and judges, for that He will give us a wisdom and eloquence which all our adversaries shall not be able to gainsay. Why then do we any longer delay? Victory is in our hands; shall we reject it? You have to contend not only with Antichrist, but with the world at large; for they only gain celestial blessings who are willing to despise whatever is of the earth. Before all things, therefore, it is necessary that you should deny yourself, and die daily. But you cannot do that by your own strength. You must fly to the mercy of God, and cease not to pray that He may direct your steps, enlighten your mind, and excite your heart, so that you may be able to dare every thing for His glory, and know by what means it is to be brought to pass."

While the provinces were exhibiting many signs of an awakened spirit, the capital seemed chiefly occupied with contriving means for the most effectual suppression of every attempt at improvement. The court and the clergy were both led by the chancellor, Antony du Prat, Archbishop of Sens. This zealous champion of the Romish Church had induced Francis to sign the famous concordat with Leo X.; and during the captivity of the monarch had exercised the whole of his influence in supporting the authority of his order against the approaches of reform. On the return of the King from Spain, he earnestly pressed him to take immediate steps for the more speedy extirpating of the heretics; and Francis, ever ready to repay loyalty by following its counsels, forthwith adopted the measures suggested by his ecclesiastical adviser. Under the auspices of the King, and aided by the willing consent of the parliament, the Archbishop summoned a synod of his clergy at Paris. The assembly met in the years 1527 and 1528, and articles were drawn up, which defined, as distinctly as the language of controversy would allow, the points to be established in the trials of the supposed heretics. Of the sixteen decrees published by the synod, the principal concerned the unity

and infallibility of the Church; the authority of councils; the obligation of believing some things not to be found in scripture; the constitutions of the Church and of the monastic orders; purgatory; the worship of saints; the sacraments; and the two great classes of doctrine which respect free-will and justification by faith, or works. All, it was said, who should dissent from the truth, that there is no other church than the Church of Rome, ought to be adjudged pertinacious heretics, and separated from the communion of the faithful. The reading of the books of Luther was prohibited, on pain of excommunication; and the people were forbidden to hold any intercourse with those suspected of being favourable to the reformed doctrines, as persons infected with a pestilence.

The punishments appointed for those convicted of heresy, and who refused to recant, were expulsion from the Church; perpetual imprisonment, or exile. But so far were the threats of the Church or government from effecting their purpose, that they seemed to rouse the spirits of thoughtful and virtuous men to bolder designs. This may be accounted for by many reasons; but more especially on the common principle that the injustice of tyranny is an affront to every principle of human nature; and they who are sensible of the strong workings of feeling in upright hearts, know how impossible it is for them to remain silent when mankind seem about to be trampled under foot by the enemies of truth and holiness. Among the foremost of those who manifested the power of righteousness in this its characteristic hostility to the pride and cruelty of a persecuting church, was Louis de Berquin.\* At the very commencement of the Reformation, this pious and enlightened man had rejoiced in the hope inspired by the rise of Luther. He read his works with avidity; and the freedom which taught him to speak his sentiments on the subject soon excited the jealous watchfulness of the theologians of Paris. But he possessed a degree of rank and power, as one of the King's coun-

\* Gerdesii, t. iv., p. 67. Beza, *Histoire Eccles.*, t. i., liv. I., p. 7.



sellors, which daunted his enemies; and time was allowed him for the maturing of his belief and resolution. It was not till after the Synod of Sens that he began to feel the real force of the hostility which had been excited against him. The decrees of that assembly had, on the one side, taught the friends of truth what was the nature of the accusation which they had to expect; and, on the other, had furnished its enemies with the ever ready means of satisfying their vengeance. The first trial of Berquin's faith and constancy was made by his committal to prison. But from this he was delivered by the friendship of the King, who could scarcely fail to respect his noble frankness and heroism in the defence of what he believed to be the truth. The power of the King, however, was of little avail in those days, when the Church assumed to itself the right of setting every principle of freedom and justice at defiance. Berquin, therefore, was soon again apprehended. Erasmus, who greatly admired his character, had warned him of the danger of his course; but he felt more deeply than the eloquent scholar and philosopher how vast was the importance of the gospel to his countrymen. With a full understanding of what he might expect, he persevered in reproving the vices of the clergy, in studying the writings of Luther, and in making their contents known to all whose attention he could command. The doctors of the Sorbonne dare not trust themselves to argument in such a matter. Their power over the means of punishment was again put forth. A sentence was obtained against Berquin, which condemned his writings to be burnt, and then ordered that, when he had pronounced a recantation, and his tongue had been bored through, he should be committed to prison for the remainder of his life. The undaunted nobleman appealed to the King and the Pope against this sentence; but his petition was equally disregarded by both. It only exasperated his enemies, who now revised their sentence, and in its improved form it consigned him to the flames. He was accordingly soon after removed from his dungeon, and having

been first strangled, was laid upon the pile and burnt to ashes.\*

But, lamentable as is the spectacle of such a sacrifice to the barbarous tyranny of the Church, it deserves to be remarked, that the sufferers at this period, in France, were very few. This cannot be attributed to the leniency of the men in power. We must therefore look for the cause in those circumstances which are frequently found to modify the worst state of affairs, and place a barrier against the progress of wickedness and injustice in the hour of its most wanton excess. Few subjects, indeed, would afford more interesting heads of inquiry to a thoughtful mind than that suggested by the fact, that in the fiercest persecutions there has always existed a restraining influence, to the overcoming of which not the best concerted efforts of the oppressor have availed. These modifying influences either existed previously, and were unobserved, or they manifested themselves for the first time at the moment when they were needed, and when it was too late for the persecutor to destroy their effect. In the present case, Divine Providence had been pleased to provide for the defence of the reformed doctrine, and its teachers, a faithful and powerful friend in the Queen of Navarre. This enlightened and amiable woman possessed considerable influence over the mind of her brother; and though it was far too little to counteract the supposed necessities of court policy, and the au-

\* Erasmus thus speaks of Berquin: "You have heard," he says, "of the fate of your countryman. Of the cause thereof I can say nothing, for it is unknown to me. If he did not merit the punishment, I grieve; if he did merit it, I grieve doubly. It is far better to die innocent than guilty. I do not doubt but that he believed the things which he defended to be holy. Hence the tranquillity of his demeanour. But, as you are aware, I never judge a man from his face. I have made diligent inquiry respecting him of those who had an intimate acquaintance with him." From the inquiry alluded to, Erasmus learnt that they who most hated the heresy of which Berquin was suspected, acknowledged that he was of the purest character, that he was most gentle and benign in temper, and in the strictest degree observant of the rights of the Church. To this it is added, that he abhorred the designs of Luther. *Quid multis? Negabant quicquam esse in vita, quod non deceret Christianam pietatem.* They said, in short, that his heaviest offence was this: he frankly owned his hatred to certain morose theologians, and certain monks, not less savage than stupid.—Epist. Eras. ad Car. Uten.

thority of his ecclesiastical counsellors, it was sufficient to induce Francis to pause in the career along which he would otherwise have been hurried with furious rapidity. To the salutary assistance rendered by Margaret of Valois may be added that which arose from a more distant and less personal cause. The political state of Europe at this moment furnished reasons for caution which, however they might escape the observation of his counsellors, in this respect blinded by selfish considerations, were plainly discernible by Francis. England, on the one side, and Spain on the other, presented an enemy, or a rival, to be dreaded under almost every conceivable change of affairs. The Protestants of Germany were the only body which seemed detached enough from the great mass of political corporations to be at the beck of a protector. At the first view of their condition, an ordinary reasoner, and one trained in courts, and acquainted only with the mode in which governments are carried on, might easily be led to the conclusion, that they would at once joyfully accept any offer of support from a generous and powerful monarch. This was the notion entertained by Francis; and, when he narrowly observed the proceedings of the Emperor, he became painfully convinced that it was his interest to make the reformers his friends and allies. Unfortunately for his credit, there appears to have been less of good faith and generosity in his treaties with the Protestants than characterized the general tenor of his personal conduct.\* He

\* Maimbourg says, that Francis was anxious to obtain peace, and thus allowed the Queen of Navarre to persuade him to send for Melancthon, and take other measures for the settlement of the contest. Great joy, he says, was expressed by the Reformers when they found this to be the case; and the poet Marot began to pour forth the bitterest satires against the doctors of the Sorbonne. But Cardinal de Tournon, Archbishop of Lyons, destroyed these expectations. Entering, one morning, into the King's bedroom, with a book in his hand, his Majesty asked him his reason for so doing. The Archbishop replied, that he was reading a very noble work, for it was the writings of one of the first apostles of France, the illustrious martyr, St. Irenæus. "And I am reading," he added, "that passage in which he relates that his master, St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, told him, that that divine apostle, being on the point of entering one of the public baths, and learning that the heretic Cerinthus was there, suddenly fell back, saying to his disciples, 'Let us flee, my dear children, lest we should be swallowed up with this enemy of Christ.'" Francis, it is added, was so



listened to the applications of the league of Smalcalde in a temper which promised the most favourable results. These were never fulfilled ; and many of those who professed the gospel in France were, in the mean time, subjected to the most cruel persecution. But for a time the bridle was in the mouth of the enemy ; and, though he had liberty enough to oppress many souls, he could not prevent the seeds of truth from being sown through the length and breadth of the land.

The year 1534\* was distinguished by events which proved both the increase of the Reformation and the wrathfulness of the spirit whereby it was opposed. It was in the provinces that the conflict raged with greatest violence ; and the Franciscan monks had the credit of being still the chief promoters of the strife. A funeral having taken place in Orleans, at which, by the request of the deceased, the wife of the magistrate of the city, they had not been allowed to perform any part, they invented a plan for terrifying the husband into the belief that his departed wife was consigned to everlasting fire ; but their fraud, diligently investigated by the magistrate himself, and then, at his instance, before the tribunals of Paris, was completely unveiled, and the offenders were submitted to a punishment which, though light in itself, contributed to increase the hatred of the whole order to the promoters of the Reformation.

This affair indicates, in a manner equally painful and striking, the state in which the people must have been when under the daily control of such teachers. It does not appear that the proceeding was one which they had any difficulty in contriving as a novel experiment. The detection would never probably have been accomplished had not the magistrate been the party interested ; but it was by the exposure of such things that the minds of the thinking portion of the community were awakened. A distinction, perhaps, ought to be made, throughout

moved by the discourse of the prelate, that he immediately revoked the invitation sent to Melancthon, protested, with an oath, that he would never injure the Church, and commanded that they should straightway follow up the processes against the heretics, and punish them with all the rigour of the laws.—*Hist. du Calvinisme*, liv. I., p. 29.

\* Called by way of distinction, in French history, “ *L’An des Placards*.”

the history of the Reformation, between those who rejoiced in its light and furthered its interests, as a republication of the gospel, as bringing home to men the means of sanctification and deliverance from sin, and those who saw reason to favour it, simply because it opposed the intellectual darkness and the spiritual tyranny of the age. In Germany there appear to have been more of the former class; in France more of the latter; but in neither the one country nor the other, nor in any of the provinces which received the Reformation, was the spiritual party found unmixed with a large proportion of men of a different temper.

This may, in some degree, account for the methods occasionally pursued in furtherance of the Reformation, and which can scarcely be regarded as consistent with the simplicity and holy candour which are the most obvious properties of the Christian character. At the period to which we are alluding, the people of Paris, and different cities of the provinces, were violently excited by the appearance of vast numbers of placards, which were affixed not only in the more public parts of the town, but at the very doors of the King's palace. These papers described the mass as idolatrous, and spoke with equal severity of other parts of the received religion. Some of the offenders were immediately discovered, and the crime was proved against them without difficulty. Others were apprehended on suspicion, and compelled by torture to acknowledge the offence. The most barbarous punishments that rage could invent were employed against them. They were placed bound upon a machine which suspended them at some height above a flaming pile, and having been let down into the midst of the fire, as into a bath, they were allowed to remain just long enough to feel all the agony it could inflict, without its depriving them of sensibility. The executioner then drew them up again, and suffering them to remain for awhile suspended in the air, he at length cut the cords by which they were bound, and allowed them to roll into the flames, in which they were left to be consumed.\*

\* Sleidan, t. i., liv. X., p. 362.

The tortures inflicted on the authors of the placards did not secure the clergy of France from fresh attacks. A book was published in the same year, which satirically described them as carrying on a trade in holy things. "Nothing," says the anonymous author, "less becomes the pastors and ministers of the church than any suspicion of sordid gain. But God, offended at the wickedness of mankind, permitted his church to be invaded and pillaged, not only by rich and avaricious merchants, but even by thieves. For who will deny that he is a thief who sells a commodity which does not belong to him, or which is not what he pretends it to be? Is not the buyer fairly deceived by him? But this is what has happened to us. For rapacious wolves have forced themselves into the place of pastors. No tongue can properly describe their ingenuity or their arts. I will, however, touch upon some of them. These traders, then, concerning whom we speak, are cunning above measure, and have so multiplied their merchandize, that every hole and corner is filled with their shops; all of which are adorned with a certain appearance of sanctity. They differ from other men in their dress, and have their crowns shaved; for it is not permitted to any one who has not that sign of the beast to carry on the trade. These alone sell and traffic perpetually. For other merchants, on festival days, especially on those which are the most sacred, cease from their trading. Others, also, for the most part, are contented with dealing in one class of commodities, as in wool, silk, wheat, wine, or cattle, or metals; but these go on trading throughout the year, and deal in every thing. Nothing, in fact, escapes their hands, neither men, women, nor children; the unborn no more than the born. They make a profit of every thing. Heaven and hell, earth and time itself, and all creatures, as well animate as inanimate, wine, bread, oil, linen, milk, butter, cheese, water, salt, fire, fumigations, all subserve their desire of gain. From all these things, I say, they have known how to make gold and silver, to the incredible expense of the people, in respect both to their fortunes, and, especially, their souls, the true word of



God being altogether vitiated and destroyed. What ! Is it not a most subtle trick to sell an article, and that at a dear rate, and let the purchaser get nothing but a sight of the thing ? Other merchants, when they show their goods, have a common proverb that they charge nothing for a sight of the commodity. But these do far otherwise. Suppose a person dies. They are straightway at your doors to inquire whether you wish the body to be covered with an elegant, or a neat, or a poor pall ? Whether you would like to have a beautiful or a less splendid cross carried before it ? For, as you determine this matter, so you must pay. But what do you get for your money, except a sight ? For they immediately take back their goods, and, having laid them by, sell them the next day to some one else. There is also another artifice deserving mention. The price of the article is increased by the merchant's dress. For a mass sung by an abbot or a bishop costs much more than one at which only a monk or a vicar officiates. But what is more iniquitous than to sell what is not one's own, and to sell it to those whose property it is, and the same thing to many ? Tell me who put up the bells, and to whom do the ground and the area of the church pertain ? Is it their patrimony ? By no means. Why, then, do they sell the sound of the bell, and the soil, which is not their own, and that so dearly and so frequently ? They will say, I doubt not, that it is the right of the Church. True : but not of the Church which Christ washed, and established, and sanctified ; but of that with which they are concerned, and which has been enriched by every species of fraud and wickedness. Christ commanded all these things to be done freely. A pleasant sight, indeed, it is to see vultures fighting for a dead body. For when a rich man dies they gather around his remains and put forth all their strength to secure the prey ; those being among the foremost who bear the name of mendicants, the Franciscans with the Dominicans, and the Carmelites with the Augustines, continually struggling to secure the burial of a corpse : a race of men base and idle, and not useless, merely, but dangerous, and most properly

deserving to be driven out of the kingdom. That which I say admits not of being contradicted; yet are there many so miserably infatuated as not to know by what spirit these men are influenced. When a benefice or a dignitary is vacant, heavens! what solicitations, what a concourse, what a diligent inquiry concerning the income, what it produces to a resident, what to a non-resident, how much is derived from baptisms, how much from marriages, how much from what they call the relics of saints, from anniversaries, from burials, from legacies and bequests.”\*

Having thus employed his sarcasm, the writer turns, in a more serious vein, to the temporal rulers of the land, and exclaims, “Why, O ye princes, do ye connive at such nefarious and impious proceedings? Why have you so long and patiently blinded yourselves to such indignities? They refuse to recognize your authority. But, nevertheless, you have power over them, whether they will, or will not, confess it. For the sword has been given you by God, and the right of coercing. Why, then, do you not exercise it, and take vengeance on this most cruel and ravenous tribe? God requires it at your hands, and will not let you neglect it with impunity. Would that you were as vigilant and unanimous in celebrating his glory, as they are in carrying on their trade. For they lose no occasion. They are perpetually awake and on the watch; nor are they less full of eyes than father Janus or Argus. . . . Arise, O God, and avenge the glory of thy name!”

Whatever may be thought of the arguments contained in this composition, it enables us to see in what manner the conduct of the ecclesiastical orders was viewed by men of letters at the period of which we are speaking. They had evidently long indulged a spirit of luxury and avarice, as inconsistent with the dictates of justice as with the nature of their calling. But it is equally apparent that their power was become sufficiently great to enable them to defy all ordinary opposition; and that it was only by some sudden exercise of authority, on

\* Gerdesii, t. iv., p. 103; Sleidan, t. i., liv. IX., p. 371.

the part of the state, that they could be brought to exercise their office with more benefit to the people, and with less deceit and selfishness. The age presented opportunities for such an attempt, which it would have been vain to look for at an earlier period. But, favourable as were circumstances to the suppression of an undue ecclesiastical influence, Francis himself was not in a condition to derive any profit from the juncture, and he wanted, moreover, those qualities of mind which are required, even in the most favourable state of affairs, for taking advantage of changes in the position of powerful parties.

Notwithstanding the movement, therefore, which manifested itself in the kingdom, and the wish which he had to avail himself of the assistance of the German Protestants against the Emperor, Francis allowed the persuasions of his ministers and courtiers to outweigh every consideration suggested to his mind from other sources, and he performed, at this time, a supererogatory service to the Church, engaging with more than common zeal in its ceremonies, and taking a part which was scarcely to be looked for from a monarch who had not wholly given himself up to the guidance of superstition. In one of the processions which were frequent at the beginning of the year 1535, he went, with great pomp, to the shrine of St. Geneviève, and having joined in the prayers of the faithful for the uprooting of heresy, he proceeded to the neighbouring palace of the Archbishop, and there addressed his assembled family, the foreign ambassadors, and his numerous court, on the spread of Lutheranism in the country, on his own loyalty and submission to the Church, and on the zeal which they ought to show in endeavouring to destroy, by every means in their power, the wicked and obstinate promoters of the new errors. A sort of Auto-da-fè was celebrated on the same day to give greater solemnity to the procession, and render the prayers of the Church more efficacious. Six persons were burnt on the line of the King's return to the palace, and the piles were fired at the moment when the cortege set out, that the unfortunate victims might be



put to the additional insult of imploring the monarch's mercy, when it was known no mercy would be shown.

In the midst of these conflicts, the knowledge of the reformed doctrines was making a rapid and steady advance through the country. Calvin had now been for many years the most energetic and authoritative of the French theologians. This celebrated man was born on the 10th of July 1509, at Noyon, in Picardy.\* Having been sent to Paris at an early age, he was placed under the best teachers which the city afforded; and as early as his twelfth year obtained, through the interest of his father, a nomination to one of the prebends in the cathedral of Noyon, and about six years after, the parish of Pont l'Evêque. But, promising as were his prospects in the Church, his father conceived that he possessed sufficient ability to raise himself to far higher degrees of fortune and dignity in the law. He therefore directed him to change the course of his studies; and Calvin, in obedience to his parent's wish, devoted himself for some time, with all the ardour which distinguished him, to his new pursuits. Such was his success in the study of jurisprudence, that at Orleans, where he attended the classes of the learned Pierre de l'Etoile, he was frequently called to the professor's chair; and, on leaving the town, the degree of Doctor of Laws was bestowed upon him as an honour freely due to his extraordinary merits.†

The change which had taken place in the views of his father tended, in a very unlooked-for manner, to the advancement of Calvin as a theologian and teacher of religion. Richly endowed by nature, it is not probable that he would have remained inactive in such an age, whatever had been the character of his earlier pursuits. But the persevering study of scholastic divinity, and constant association with men and institutions whose object it would have been to make him faithful by inflaming him with their pride and bigotry, could have produced only the worst effects on a mind

\* The original name was Caulvin.

† Beza Vita Calvin. Ruchat. Hist. de la Reformation de la Suisse, t. v. liv. VIX. 619. Gerdesii, t. iv. p. 40; Maimbourg Hist. du Calvinisme, p. 52.

like his. His attention, on the contrary, being directed to a science which taught him the necessity of diligent inquiry, and a strict regard to truth and justice, many of the dangers were avoided to which his ardent temperament would have exposed him; he gained a more copious and varied erudition; and being freed, at the same time, from the trammels of self-interest, and the blinding influences of party, he could weigh with fairness the evidence which both Catholics and Protestants had to offer in their defence.

Religion, with its sublime mysteries and mighty interests, had acquired too strong a hold of Calvin's heart to allow of his ceasing to study its truths, because he was no longer to aim at possessing the splendid dignities of the Church. He appears to have been first led to inquire carefully into the doctrines of the reformers by his relation, Peter Olivetan. His progress at Orleans in legal acquirements was almost equalled by his advance in divine knowledge. He now began to see so clearly the worth of the efforts made in Germany and Switzerland to throw off the yoke of the Roman Church, that he used his endeavours to bring his intimate associates to the same state of feeling, and succeeded so far, that many of them united with him in the close study of the Bible, and in the general review of their religious opinions. It was not with mere novices that these inquiries were carried on. Some of the most accomplished scholars of the age were at this time in Orleans and the adjacent district. The study of Greek and Hebrew was promoted with an earnestness which corresponded to the important objects for which it was pursued. It ought not indeed to be lost sight of, that literature is most deeply indebted to the religious feelings of mankind universally, and that it is more particularly so, in the transition period of European civilization, to the authors of the Reformation. The Church of Rome had produced noble instances of profound learning gained under the holy influence of a sincere piety. But the secularization of the most powerful of the Romish clergy in the later times; their almost exclusive attention to the political affairs of their

Church; the feeling that the claims which it had put forth must thenceforth be supported by force or the most artful controversy, drew off the better spirits of the priesthood and monastic orders from the calmer paths of literature to the fruitless fields of worldly strife and ambition. However willing, therefore, we may be to give the honour which is so richly due to many of the members of the Roman Church for their successful cultivation of literature, we may still rejoice in the progress of the Reformation, as affording, in the sixteenth century, the best and surest support to true learning that it could have enjoyed in such an age of worldliness. The deep responsibility which the preachers of the Reformation felt when they pleaded the divinity of their doctrines, and appealed to scripture in defence of their proceedings, urged them to an examination of the text of the Bible, such as had probably never been undertaken since the commencement of the Church. Calvin, obliged by no other sentiment than that of profound reverence for truth, devoted himself among the foremost to this holy pursuit. He had at present, it seems, no idea of pursuing any other study, professionally, than that to which he had now resigned himself at the desire of his parent. The theological learning, therefore, of this extraordinary man was the pure fruit of a great and a sanctified mind. This deserves consideration, the views which the world forms of religion being, according to its own profession, frequently determined by the knowledge which it has of the motives of its advocates. If this rule be adopted in the case of such men as Calvin, it will command the respectful regards of thousands, who, imperfectly acquainted with the subject, would pass over the claims of the servants of God as instigated by motives as selfish as those of the basest of mankind.

The death of Calvin's father produced an unexpected change in his views. He now found himself at liberty to pursue his own wishes; and at once resigning the prospects of wealth and distinction which his legal studies had opened, he resolved to join that holy band whose progress he had watched with an interest equally



intense and loving. It was an important question to which quarter he should direct his attention. France itself presented a field in which the most ambitious and the most zealous might be anxious to labour: but it also presented obstacles which, though they might not daunt the resolution of one who trusted in the power of God's mercy and blessing, might yet warn those who would wish to do the utmost with the means which they possessed from attempting a work for which their powers were not adapted, or for which it did not appear that the means which they enjoyed had been bestowed. Calvin was in the town of Bourges when his father died. He had gone thither to attend the lectures of Andrew Alciat, the most distinguished of the Italian jurists; and in the same place he found Melchior Wolmar, no less distinguished for his acquaintance with the language and literature of Greece. But it was not only the friendship of these excellent men that rendered his residence in this part of the country delightful to Calvin. He had discovered, in the little town of Liguères, a people anxious to be made acquainted with the gospel; and to them he was in the habit of preaching its truths in a manner to which they had hitherto been strangers.\*

It is impossible to suppose that, with a mind so deeply filled with religious knowledge, and ardent as it was in its holy aspirations, Calvin could fail to be occupied with many anxious thoughts respecting his future destiny. But, for the moment, the cares of his family claimed his serious attention; he therefore hastened to Noyon. Having executed the charges which had been imposed upon him by the decease of his father, he went to Paris. There he entered again, with an entire devotion of mind and heart, on the study of theology. His united learning and piety soon pointed him out to the notice of Nicolas Cop,† the rector of the university, a man who had advanced far before the generality of his cotemporaries in the knowledge of

\* Ruchat. Hist. de la Reform. de la Suisse, t. v. liv. XIV. p. 614.

† Nicolas Cop was himself a physician, and the son of William Cop, who had been physician to the King.—Beza, Hist. Eccles.

what the age required. Under the auspices of this venerable friend, and others of the same disposition, Calvin continued to pursue the course which he had so happily commenced. The standard of learning and excellence which the most eminent of the reformers had placed before them was that whereby he desired to measure himself. Against none of those by whom the Reformation was promoted can the charge be laid of a want of experience, or want of inquiry, or want of erudition. Calvin had not been long in Paris when he completed a commentary on Seneca's treatise "*De Clementia*." The willing examination of the foundations on which simple reason had fixed the common principles of morality, was a characteristic of his mind, and by the time he had finished this translation, profoundly versed as he was in the knowledge of the law, it would, probably, have been difficult to find, in any part of Europe, a more accomplished mind than that of Calvin.

At the period of which we are speaking, the Queen of Navarre was the firm, and almost recognized support of the protestant party. Her court at Paris was the resort of all who had distinguished themselves for their love of biblical learning, or who were secretly endeavouring to promote the general interests of the gospel. The publication of a book, entitled "*Le Miroir de l'Ame Pecheresse*," in the year 1533, attracted the notice of the doctors of the Sorbonne to the part she was taking. It was commonly suspected that she had either compiled the book herself, or had employed some one in the work under her particular direction. No mention was made of the saints or of merits in it. Purgatory was represented as existing but in the purifying blood of Christ; and the prayers usually offered to the Virgin Mary were here addressed to the one only Mediator between God and man. Such was the indignation with which the book was regarded by the priests, that they employed abuse and ridicule, as well as the sharper weapons of intolerance, against the Queen. They represented her in satirical dramas, vilified her with the ribaldry of the vulgar; and, fearing

that this might not avail, condemned the work as one which it would be a violation of the law of the Church to peruse.

Margaret of Valois had sufficient spirit to resent this affront. She appealed to the King, and, acknowledging the work as her own, insisted on knowing the precise reasons for which it had been condemned. Urged by these pressing entreaties of his sister, whom he fondly loved, Francis was induced to demand of the doctors of the university their objections to the work in question. Nicolas Cop took advantage of his dignified situation to address the ruling members of the academy in a speech which could not fail to make his own sentiments more clearly known than ever. He strongly reprehended the temerity with which the Queen had been assailed, and warned those who were foremost in the strife against provoking the anger of their sovereign, or proceeding in a course which led them to take arms against a princess who might be styled the mother of all virtues and of liberal accomplishments.

The force of the persuasions or arguments of the rector was acknowledged by many who, under any other circumstances, would gladly have silenced him by a sentence of condemnation. It was discovered that the King would regard as an insult to himself and to his family the continuance of the prohibition issued against his sister's book. The university therefore agreed to the propriety of withdrawing the censures. But, while the monarch was flattered by this obedience to his will, and the Queen of Navarre derived fresh resolution from the praise and regard with which her work had been received, Nicolas Cop found himself exposed to unexpected dangers. Many of the clergy about the court and university beheld with indignation the attention paid to one whose opinions were so suspected as those of the rector. It wanted but little labour to organize a party resolved upon his ruin. The repetition of the sentiments which he had uttered in defence of the Queen's book, in another oration before the university, quickened the progress of events. Calvin is known to have had great part in the compo-



sition of this latter address, or at least to have greatly influenced its delivery. The time was now ripe for the rector's ruin. An order was issued for his immediate appearance before the tribunal of the Parliament. Not suspecting the real designs of his enemies, he prepared to obey the summons without delay. At this juncture his friends became sufficiently acquainted with the intention of his judges to warn him of his impending danger. Pressed by their earnest entreaties, he paused before throwing himself upon the justice of such prejudiced examiners, and then took the way to Basil, the native place of his family.

Calvin was quickly informed of the attempts against his venerable friend; and the messengers who acquainted him with the means which had been adopted to secure the safety of the rector, gave him intelligence which made it evident that his own safety depended on a precipitate flight. He was absent when the officers arrived who had been sent to apprehend him. But they carefully searched his chambers, and, having seized his letters and other papers, made themselves acquainted with the names and proceedings of all those who were most deeply involved in the work of reformation. Calvin's hasty departure was prevented by the Queen of Navarre. Knowing his danger, she lost no time in soliciting for him the King's favour and protection. By this means he escaped any immediate injury; but the aspect of affairs was so little improved, that he judged it wise to leave Paris, and take up his abode in the retired district of Saintonge. There he occupied himself partly in the study of those profounder questions of theology which it belonged to the character of his mind to rejoice in, and partly in the composition of short discourses, which he gave to the pastors of the surrounding villages, and whereby he had the satisfaction of contributing largely to the instruction of the people. He also visited Nerac and there enjoyed the conversation of Jacob le Fevre, one of the most distinguished divines of the age, and whose freedom in explaining the truth had excited against him, while at Paris, the bitterest hatred of the Sorbonnists.

Having thus employed himself for some months, Calvin returned to the capital. But it was now that the fires of persecution began to give fearful signals to the friends of the gospel that it was time for them to prepare either for martyrdom or flight. Calvin saw that it was in vain at present to struggle against the overpowering influence of the clergy. He had, moreover, no especial charge or duty which demanded his stay. Had he been the pastor of a flock, whose steadfastness in the faith depended upon his example, or the consolations which flowed from his discourses, it is not to be supposed that, strong as he was in mind, he would have refused to encounter the dangers belonging to his situation.\*

Basil was at this time the favourite resort of men of learning and piety. Thither Calvin resolved to direct his steps. But before his departure he published his treatise, entitled "*Psychopannychia*," a work intended to confute the opinions of those who represent the separate state of the soul as one of sleep and insensibility. Having, at length, set out on his journey, he proceeded as far as Metz without encountering any material difficulty. At that place, one of the men that attended him rode off with the horse which carried the baggage and money. As he had no friends in the neighbourhood, and no money in his pocket, he found himself in a situation from which not all his learning or ingenuity could apparently set him free. But, in this perplexity, the remaining attendant willingly drew out his own purse with ten crowns in it. This greatly raised the spirits of the travellers, and they contrived to live on the ten crowns till they reached Strasburg, where they had the means of replenishing their stores.

Calvin found at Basil the learned Wolfgang Capricius

\* Maimbourg says, that Calvin returned to Paris in the hope that Morin, the chief agent in the pursuit of the Protestants, had forgotten him, or would not suspect he had returned. "But seeing," he adds, "that the heretics were now sought out with more ardour than ever, he finally quitted France." He makes no remark on Calvin's flight, but, when speaking of the ministers of Metz, he says, that instead of exposing themselves, like good shepherds, for their little flock, and seeking the glory of martyrs, they fled. Maimbourg himself, it is probable, saw a distinction between the two cases.—*Hist. du Calvinisme*, pp. 13, 60.

Capito, who had first settled there in 1512, as one of the clergy of the cathedral. His father, strongly prejudiced against the manners of the priests in those times, induced him to resign his office, and devote himself to the study of medicine. The death of his father left him at liberty to pursue his own inclinations, and he for some time studied the law. But he was so deeply impressed with the love of religious inquiry, that he finally returned to his early pursuits, not however, it is said, till he had so completely mastered the other branches of learning, that he was qualified to take the degree of Doctor in all three. Having returned to Basil, he devoted himself with great diligence to preaching, and, in the course of his labours, went through St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. It is scarcely possible that an earnest and devout mind should be long employed upon this divine composition without discovering the grand foundations of the gospel. Capito appears to have gathered new light and strength from every fresh examination of the apostolic argument; and in the year 1517 he declared his assent to the doctrines of the Reformation by refusing any more to perform mass. From this period he continued to labour openly in promoting the preaching of the gospel, and in endeavouring to reform the corrupted services of the Church. His character for virtue and gravity, united with the fame of his great learning, secured him general attention; and to him, more than to any other, is ascribed the early establishment of Basil as a seat of protestant theology.

With Capito Calvin formed a close and affectionate friendship. He had also the advantage of finding in Simon Grynœus, who had lately been professor of Greek in Vienna and Heidelberg, another faithful and experienced companion in his studies.\* With these emi-

\* We learn how highly Grynœus was estimated from a letter written to him by Œcolampadius while he was professor of Greek at Heidelberg: "Lectis quam diligentissime literis tuis, Grynœe dulcissime, quantum exhilaratus sim, quantum gestierim, dicere non possum: spero enim Deum aliqua ex parte votis meis respondere, ut propediem ad nos migres. Nam dum confero, hinc quæ te absterrent, et inde quæ te invitant, multo amplius momenti in his video situm, quæ te nobis statuunt, quam in his quæ à nobis abstrahant. Gaudeo ante omnia, animo te præditum ad divinam



nent men he continued his researches in sacred literature, adding from day to day fresh stores of knowledge to those which he had been so laboriously accumulating from the earliest period of his career. The fruits of his application appeared in his celebrated "Institutes of the Christian Religion," which he finished at Basil, and published in the year 1535. It was at this time that Francis I. seemed about to resign himself entirely to the most cruel impulses of a persecuting spirit. His former suavity of disposition, his love of liberal studies, and, more especially, the friendly manner in which he had addressed the German reformers, gave promises of good which were now dissipated, and appeared to have been only given at first that they might serve as a proof of the weakness of the monarch, and the intolerance of his selfish advisers. In the hope that the mind of Francis might be yet disabused, and that the consideration of the grand features of evangelical religion would plead for its professors with a voice that must be heard in the soul and conscience, Calvin addressed his work to the King. His dedicatory epistle is a noble specimen of earnest eloquence. It abounds in marks of respect for the character and authority of the monarch; and it appeals to the virtues for which he had been honoured by the world with all the ingenuity of a fair and honest rhetoric. But it speaks also in the solemn and warning tones of the gospel: it places before the understanding the great duty of inquiry; and it stirs up the heart, supposed to be not insensible to truth and justice, to the lively apprehension of God's presence among his people.

There is too much reason to fear that the impressive exhortations of Calvin were not allowed to reach the ears of the monarch, or that, if they were, the immediate pressure of arguments and covert threats on the part of his ministers, obliged him to throw them off.\* This was

*vocationem tam facile sequaci, ut nec patriæ fines, nec parentum ac amicorum consuetudinem spectes, morarive te sinas, si quo vocet Dominus plane spes est, huc te, illo potissimum jubente, accersiri. Quæ enim certior vocatio, ut quam si illuc, ubi suam gloriam, plurimorumque utilitatem per te promoveat, inviteris?"—Monumenta Antiq. Gerdes. t. ii. n. c. p. 149.*

\* Maimbourg says, that Calvin had the boldness, or audacity, to dedicate his work to Francis; but that, whether that prince read the pathetic epistle

no difficult matter. They had, at the best, penetrated but little below the surface. Had they once been received into the heart, the mere calculations of expediency could not have rooted them out. Even the representations of angry zeal would, in this case, have availed nothing, and the Reformation would have found in Francis a generous, and, politically speaking, a powerful and successful supporter.

The publication of the "Institutes" was the most important effort which Calvin made in support of the Reformation in France. Information reached him the following year, that Italy was awakening to the sound of the gospel, and he hastened to Ferrara, where Renée, the consort of Hercules II., and daughter of Louis XII. of France, had already done much to encourage the preaching of evangelical truth, and show the superiority of heavenly grace to the most splendid pretensions of a powerful but corrupt church. The result of this visit belongs to the subject of another chapter. Calvin, after a short stay in Italy, returned to Paris, where he still found affairs in the same unpromising condition as in the preceding year. He could effect nothing, therefore, of consequence; and he accordingly returned to Switzerland, there to establish another branch of the Protestant Church, the history of which is of sufficient importance to demand our separate and particular attention. Here, therefore, we leave, for the present, this great and venerable labourer in the vineyard of the Reformed Church, returning to the contemplation of events which afford scarcely any thing more than a series of melancholy proofs of human depravity, selfishness, or error.

Francis, in 1535, sent his minister, William du Bellay, as ambassador to the Protestants of Germany. The brother of this statesman was Bishop of Paris, and, if report speak true, was interested, in no slight degree, in some of the questions which regarded the reformation of the Church and the clergy. It was to these brothers that

addressed to him or not, it is certain that, far from extinguishing the fires which he had awakened against heresy, he increased them throughout the kingdom by a number of new ordinances.—*Hist. du Calvinisme*, p. 61.

Melancthon communicated his opinions respecting the means of reconciling the parties between which the Church seemed divided. His object was to prove, that, if the Church of Rome would give up its claims to dictation respecting doctrine, the reformers would leave the clergy in peaceable possession of their wealth and dignities, and that, with this compromise, both the one and the other ought to rest contented.\* But Melancthon forgot that an enlightened and amiable mind, a spirit in which humanity and wisdom are willing to have all things common, is a mirror in which the real state of the world is not to be seen, and that it must look beyond itself, and its own conceptions and plans, if it would produce the changes which it deems necessary for the tranquillizing of society. Melancthon was endowed with all the qualities which could best fit a man<sup>e</sup> for performing the office of a mediator, where mediation was practicable. But the heads of the Roman Church could give up no point to the Protestants, without binding themselves to a reform of their discipline, and a general modification of their opinions. Had they done this, the triumph of Protestantism would have been almost complete; the principle would have been established for which alone enlightened and upright men cared to contend; and the course of events would have speedily brought about the various changes in the Church of Rome itself which were required to place it on the foundation of primitive and scriptural piety. But the same difficulties opposed themselves to a compromise of this kind, as were to be encountered in the bold and open warfare of the Reformation. Melancthon's views excited the scorn of some, and the hatred of others.

Francis carried on, for a short time longer, the system which he seems to have invented, partly for his own

\* Melancthon was tremblingly alive to the responsibility of his situation; and while he doubted his own power to effect all that he wished, he seems to have doubted, in an almost equal degree, the ability of the King of France to fulfil his designs. "*Cumque esset de regis voluntate existimatio ipsius præclara, tam multis tantopere illam prædicantibus, quid ipse tamen rex, ut maxime vellet atque cuperet, posset efficere, non sine causa dubitabat.*"—Camerarius, *Vita Melanc.*, p. 149.



peace of mind, and partly for the satisfaction of his sister. The death of the Cardinal du Prat offered fresh prospects of success to the few who desired to see a restoration of tranquillity ; but the hope thus awakened was speedily dissipated by the accession of the Cardinal Tournon to the same situation of authority and influence. Again, therefore, the monarch presented the singular exhibition of a prince who, pretending to tolerate a sect, was, in the meanwhile, putting all its members to death on whom he could lay his hands. The year 1535 afforded fearful proofs of the determination of the clergy to exterminate heresy by fire and the sword. Such was the violence of the persecution, that several of the Swiss cantons united with the people of Strasburg in petitioning Francis to cease from measures so contrary to the spirit of both freedom and the gospel. The answer returned to this petition was couched in terms which might have led an inexperienced eye to suppose that the request was granted. But liberty and life were promised to the suffering Protestants on no other terms than a retractation of their opinions. "Let them own that they are in error," was the purport of the reply : "Let them prove to the bishops that they repent them of their crime, and they shall be pardoned." This afforded little satisfaction to the petitioners, and they insisted on easier conditions. For a moment, the King seemed disposed to listen to their renewed applications, but so illusory were the signs of tolerance at this period, that victim after victim was hurried to the burning pile, and the dungeons were crowded with sufferers awaiting a similar fate.\* The people of Bern beheld these proceedings with irrepressible anger. In the month of November, 1537, they addressed the King in terms which breathed the true spirit of religious freedom and compassion. "They had witnessed," they said, "with the highest indignation, the efforts made to persuade the King to treat their brethren in so barbarous a manner : they learnt, therefore, what little consideration he gave to their petitions ; but they would still entreat him, by all the services they had rendered France, and by the glory of God, that he

\* Gerdesii Hist. t. iv. p. 126.

would stop the persecution, and allow the gospel and its ministers to have free course through his dominions."

The efforts thus made in favour of the French Protestants were repeated in vain. Francis had expended the whole of his tolerance in promises; and the difficulties which stood in the way of his making a ready alliance with the more powerful body of Germanic reformers, prevented his pursuing a line of policy which might have been a counterpoise to the severity of the clergy. Letters were sent to him from Smalcalde in 1538; and again it might have been supposed, both from the letters themselves, and the answer of the monarch, that it required but a brief continuance of the correspondence to make the King of France a faithful ally of the reformers. Yet, almost in the same hour in which Francis spoke with the utmost suavity respecting the interests of religious freedom, and represented himself as firmly opposed to the tyranny of the Roman Pontiff, did he allow an amiable and enlightened young nobleman to be consumed to ashes, because he doubted the absolute authority of the law which prohibited his eating meat.

But it still wanted the growth of a gloomier spirit than that which had as yet shown itself, to hurry on the march of persecution. Francis was as undetermined in his designs, when prompted by the Church, as when addressed by the friends of the Reformation. When, yielding to the persevering calls of his clergy, he gave repeated signals to the executioner, he excused his conduct and satisfied his conscience by asserting that it was not against the Protestants, or those who only wished to cleanse the Church of its corruptions, that he exercised his power, but against the Anabaptists and other fanatics, the enemies of all religion. It would be easy to show, that, had Francis not wished to deceive himself, he might at once have discovered that his apology was without foundation; but his mere attempt at a defence indicates that he was far from being of the same temper as his advisers, and that it was not in the reign of such a king, however deficient in the higher

principles of right conduct, that the tyranny of Rome could fully effect its designs.\*

The report of the conversation which is said to have passed between the King's ambassador and some of the principal German theologians, throws unexpected light not only on the opinions of the monarch, but on those of the nation at large. According to this report, the envoy urged that Francis agreed, in the main, with the sentiments of Melancthon, as set forth in his "Book of Common Places." He allowed to the Pope a supremacy given by human but not by divine right. On purgatory his opinions were so undecided, that he requested his theologians to prove the correctness of their views from scripture. To this they assented; but after some months replied, that they did not wish to pour forth darts which the enemy might hurl back upon themselves. In regard to monastic vows, the King proposed that those who had taken them in early youth should be set free; and, in the same manner, a middle way was found for escaping from the difficult question respecting the marriage of priests. "Let those who are already married," said Francis, "retain their wives: let no more marry; if they do, then let them discontinue the exercise of their ministry." But the most important point in the remarks made on this occasion was in reference to the administration of the communion in two kinds. The King, it was said, had discoursed with Pope Clement VII. on the subject, and had urged the matter so strongly, that there was reason to believe the Pontiff had some intention of yielding to his persuasions. One of the most powerful arguments, it appears, employed by the King, was derived from the practice of the French Church which

\* The expectations which had been formed from the apparent moderation of Francis, are strongly noticed in a letter of Sturmius to Melancthon, dated March, 1534: "*Ut in turbulentissimis maximeque perniciosis tempestatibus jam tamen, ex optimo et pulcherrimo statu, cujus nobis viri prudentes auctores fuerunt, in maximas calamitates et summas ærumnas ineptissimorum hominum consiliis delapsi sumus. Scripsi tibi superiori anno, quam pulchrè staremus, quam bene de regis æquitate sperandum esset: gratulabamur tum nobis in vicem: sed eam occasionem homines furiosi propè omnem abstulerunt.*"—Scultet. *Annal.* t. ii. p. 443. William du Bellay used all his power, when ambassador in Germany, to support the King's pretensions to a mild and tolerant spirit. Seildan, t. i. liv. IX. p. 386.



had been, he alleged, to admit the laity, till within a few years, to the communion in both kinds. He had learnt that such was the case from some aged persons, who stated that they remembered the time when it was the practice throughout the kingdom. The theologians replied, that kings were anointed as well as priests, and that, therefore, they had a right to the privilege of receiving in both kinds, but that it would not be lawful for the people at large.

Little attention was paid to these mere verbal representations of the monarch's willingness to entertain the notion of reform. He had the means before him of proving his sincerity by setting a practical example of toleration; and this he refused to do. The German Protestants, therefore, acted with equal dignity and policy in rejecting his overtures. To have entered into an alliance with a prince who, as yet, had done nothing but aid the persecutors of their brethren, would have been to throw aside their character as champions of the gospel, to assume that of selfish, calculating politicians.

The situation of France was at this time sufficiently distressing. With all the force assumed and exercised by the dominant party, the vacillation of the King, and the dangerous posture of affairs, opened the way for bold spirits to make a vigorous attack on the strongholds of tyranny. Among the foremost of those who distinguished themselves by the fearlessness with which they expressed their opinions, was the poet, Marot. This writer is placed by the historians of literature at the head of the school which flourished from his time up to the age of Malherbe. Francis, by his patronage of learning, had greatly quickened the tendency to change, which had in this, as it must ever have, some far deeper and mightier origin than individual taste or patronage. But under his auspices two Greek and two Hebrew professors were established at Paris, and in 1534 a Latin professor was appointed for the express purpose of improving the style of scholastic compositions by a rigid attention to classical models.\* The same efforts were made to improve

\* The ardour with which the study of the ancient languages was taken up is shown by the early and successful cultivation of Lexicography in France. William Budæus published his "Commentary on the Greek Lan-

the various departments of philosophical study, and France seemed on the point of enjoying a revival of letters still more signal than that which had thrown so much splendour over Italy. Marot, who is generally acknowledged to have been wanting in the higher qualities of a poet, eagerly adopted as his masters the now popular writers of Rome. These he sought to imitate with a strictness which, while it secured neatness of expression, and gave to whatever had the least pretensions to be considered as thought or wit the whole of its proper worth, cut off, at once, most of the resources which still existed for the revival of a poetry more strictly national. But Marot secured attention and popularity by his new style, and these he employed on the side of the Reformation. His poems were read and admired by thousands who would probably have remained wholly unmoved by a graver style of address. The religious feeling which ran through most of his compositions recommended them to the favour of the Queen of Navarre and others, who watched for every sign that could encourage them in the hope of an improving piety. Several of the Psalms translated by Marot furnished the people with the means of turning the current of their most lively emotions in the direction of holiness. But these things could hardly fail to draw upon the poet the suspicious observation of the clergy. He was accused of Lutheranism, and cast into prison. This occurred during the captivity of Francis in Spain. The return of the monarch secured the liberation of the bard, who immediately fled for protection to the Queen of Navarre, and soon after went to Ferrara, where the Duchess gladly received him, not only as a man of genius deserving the favour of a court long celebrated for its literary splendour, but as a faithful champion of the gospel. Marot subsequently returned to France, but even the protection of the King no longer seemed a sufficient safeguard against the inveterate

guage" before the royal patronage was accorded in so open a manner. This eminent scholar was followed by the elder Stephanus, by Robert Constantin, and H. Stephanus, with a host of others, whose labours exhibit that wonderful degree of patience and erudition which must be looked for only in times when the love of learning is a passion.

enemies of religious freedom. He saw that preparations were being made for his destruction, and prudently, therefore, retired to Geneva. Here, to the scandal of religion and his own indelible disgrace, he committed an act of licentiousness which, according to the severe laws of the republic, would have brought him to the scaffold, but for the interest of his friends. Having been publicly scourged, he was expelled the city, and took refuge in Turin, where he died in the year 1544, at the age of sixty.\*

Prevented by many conflicting circumstances from giving free rein to persecution, in the more cultivated provinces, the heads of the French Church turned their thoughts to the neglected districts of Dauphiny and Piedmont. The descendants of the old Waldenses still preserved, in the valleys of these provinces, the love of their forefathers for simpler forms of doctrine and worship than those of the churches which surrounded them. When Louis XII. was on his way to Italy, in 1501, his attention was particularly called to their heretical dispositions, and the dangerous example which they set to the rest of the people. Such an appeal was not to be rejected at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Louis directed the proposed inquiry to be forthwith instituted. His orders were promptly obeyed; but instead of the result being as had been expected, a proof that the Waldenses deserved utter extermination,

\* Marot translated twenty more of the Psalms while at Geneva; and Beza completed the version of the whole book. Maimbourg speaks with great contempt of this translation, and says of Marot himself, that he had a mind disposed to a certain kind of pleasantry, which, employing itself on things the most holy in a manner much more profane than fine and delicate, conducted directly to impiety and even atheism. "This appears," he adds, "in those ballads, and other light pieces, which remain of his poetry. For whilst that he knew little, and was wholly unacquainted with literature, he was, notwithstanding, naturally the most simple and polished poet, or, rather, versifier, of the age, in which these qualities were scarcely elsewhere to be found." It was by the advice of the professor of Hebrew in the royal college, that he had been led to versify the Psalms; "but whether," says Maimbourg, "he did not understand what his master said, when explaining the Hebrew, or that he forgot it immediately, there is no agreement in this version with the original." A later French writer speaks of Marot in terms which deny him even the praise of poetical merit. "Where was the danger for France, or for the King," says Lacroix, "that they sang, in some few assemblies, psalms translated by Marot in verses destitute of force, emotion, and harmony?"—*Hist. de France pendant les Guerres de Religion*. Introd. p. 54. Maimbourg, p. 97.



Louis exclaimed, on reading the report presented to him, "Alas! they are better Christians than we!" This event greatly promoted the cause of the Waldenses. The bands of oppressors, who had stood ready to overwhelm them, were disheartened at the announcement of the King's sentiments; and they remained undisturbed till the year 1530. During the intervening period, Luther and Zuingli had spread the knowledge of the gospel to the very borders of the mountainous tract where these humble precursors of the protestant sects had found a refuge from the world. The intelligence at length reached their ears, that men of mighty minds and profound knowledge had discovered that mankind were in error on those very points for opposing which their fathers had bled in ages past. Such information could scarcely fail to awaken all the affection and piety of their hearts. They listened with eager attention to every fresh communication brought them from Germany or Switzerland. In the outline of doctrine which described the teaching of the reformers they discovered the means of correcting much that was imperfect in their own. The earnest desire of knowing the truth was a feeling inherited from their fathers; and now it operated in their minds more forcibly than ever; the prospect of gaining the required intelligence, and the knowledge that there existed in other lands men who could sympathize with them, opening new views of advancement in the pursuit of holiness. To secure all the advantages which the present state of affairs offered, they sent representatives to Basil, Strasbourg, and Bern, to communicate with Œcolampadius and the other leading teachers of the Reformed Church. Under the guidance of these excellent instructors they became daily better informed respecting the essential supports of Christian faith. In 1535, therefore, they collected their little resources, and commissioned Olivetans, at Neufchatel, to print for them the French translation of the Bible made by Jacob le Fevre d'Étaples.\*

\* The first part of this translation, consisting of the four Gospels, was printed at Paris in 1523, and, in 1530 the whole work was published at Antwerp. The Vulgate formed the basis of this version, but it was corrected

The rapid circulation of the Scriptures alarmed the champions of the old state of things more than any of the proceedings which marked the progress of reform. In many cases this was the mere effect of ignorance. There was a dread lest the Word of God, which was rather regarded with a trembling and mysterious reverence, than valued for its inestimable worth to the soul, might be deprived of its sacredness in the hands of new translators. The Vulgate had been consecrated by the authority of the Church. Its phraseology, incorporated with all the offices of devotion, was become dear to the affections of the people; and it seemed that, in giving the Scriptures a new form, although the only means of rendering them intelligible, the substance of prayer, the proof of sound doctrine, and whatever else lay at the root of religion, were about to suffer violence. It might have required some time, even under favourable circumstances, to persuade all classes of the people that such a work was undertaken for the honour of God, and from a profounder love of Scripture itself. But if such would probably have been the case had the work originated with the dominant party in the Church, it is easy to conceive with what mingled disgust and indignation the same design must have been viewed when commenced by a body stigmatized as heretical. The ignorance of the many was fully equalled by the sharp-sighted jealousy of the few. It was manifest to those who had ability to form a correct judgment on the matter, that any system which depends upon the imagination or the passions cannot endure the light of a species of knowledge which bears directly on the subject. It is not the diffusion of science, or the study of history, or even the speculative cultivation of a deep theology, which the friends of a corrupt church have to fear. They are not sufficiently relevant to the real point at issue to make them dangerous to the reign of superstition among the people. The knowledge, on the contrary, which Scripture gives is adapted to the souls

by reference to the original. It was used for some time by the Swiss reformers, with little alteration. Beza reckons the labour of Olivetans, in printing this Bible, among the most valuable contributions to the Reformation.—*Hist. Eccles.*, p. 21.

of the great mass of mankind. It is as simple as it is sublime; as pointed and penetrating as it is comforting; and, while it affords the truest nourishment that the mind can receive at any stage of its growth, it is that which is best of all calculated to stimulate the slumbering, to revive the weary, to nurse the faculties only beginning to show signs of life into a state of firm and energetic activity. It is the almost instinctive recognition of this fitness of scriptural knowledge to bring out, in healthy development, all the nobler principles of humanity, and to make every man that receives it, in a becoming spirit, mighty in the exercise of thought, that has rendered religious oppressors, in all ages and countries, anxious to keep the Bible, or the right of interpreting it, exclusively to themselves.

The people of Dauphiny and Piedmont, therefore, could not have done any thing more likely to bring down upon themselves the hottest indignation of their enemies than this new attempt to circulate the Bible. It was left to the parliament of Aix to commence proceedings against them; and this duty that body performed with so zealous a cruelty, that the unfortunate Waldenses saw themselves in danger of immediate ruin. In this melancholy state of affairs, their only resource was an appeal to the clemency of the King. Francis could not refuse a petition which described the wretchedness of an innocent and helpless people, whose sole offence was attachment to the religion of their ancestors. The very laws of chivalry, the dispositions of every generous mind, demanded attention to such an appeal. A suspension of the acts prepared by the parliament of Aix was obtained for six months. But this was to afford little aid to the persecuted party. To leave their homes, give up their faith, or perish,—this was the choice presented them. The delay in the execution of the sentence, which might be seen written in the gloomy countenances of their enemies, was of no avail to a people who were too honest to change their creed, and too poor to leave their country without the prospect of utter ruin. The interval allowed, therefore, was of greater advantage to the oppressor than to the



oppressed. It gave the ministers of the dominant party time to arrange their plans, and fix themselves more firmly in the resolves of a desolating spirit. The period of enacted toleration quickly passed away. No threats had been able to lessen the resolution of the devout and brave-hearted peasantry. When the hour of trial came, they submitted to be despoiled of their goods, to be branded on the forehead, or put to death, rather than renounce any part of their belief. But it was not till the year 1540 that the engines of destruction appeared fully charged with their death-dealing darts. By that time the miserable slaves and ministers of superstition and ecclesiastical tyranny had become familiar with their duties. Hitherto they were obliged to content themselves with a few victims, selected from among the mass, and affording, by their bold and ardent expression of attachment to their faith, some excuse to those who watched for their destruction.\* The parliament of Aix was again the willing agent of the clergy. By a decree of that tribunal, it was ordered that Merindol, the chief town in the district of the Waldenses, should be rased to the ground; and that care should be taken to reduce to ruins not only all the villages and castles in the neighbourhood, which might afford a shelter to the fugitive inhabitants, but the very woods, to the recesses of which they might be obliged to flee in the extremity of their misery.

This decree seemed to deprive the unfortunate people of every hope of safety. Despairing of finding any compassion in the hearts of their persecutors, they again turned to the King. The known generosity of his character, and the noble conduct of his predecessor, united in encouraging them to take this step. Francis listened to their appeal with patience; but, whatever might be his willingness to serve them, he had not sufficient knowledge of their case to enable him to decide at once respecting the measures which it would be just to pursue. He issued an order, therefore, directing William du Bellay, at that time governor of Piedmont, to make the necessary inquiries, and report to him on

\* Beza, *Hist. Eccles.*, t. i., liv. I., p. 36.

the subject. The Viceroy began and conducted the investigation in a spirit of candour and benevolence. At the conclusion of the inquiry, he acquainted Francis that he had discovered some religious errors among the Waldenses, but that they were free from other faults; that they were a virtuous and laborious people; faithful subjects; useful tillers of the land; and only to be accused on the points, that they frequented the churches but rarely; did not pray to the saints; avoided the use of holy water; and placed no trust in masses or pilgrimages.\*

It would have required a much higher degree of religious zeal than either Francis, or any of his cotemporary princes, possessed, to persuade him to destroy a people morally and politically so faithful to their duties. Kings are rarely to be found who have the interests of religion so deeply at heart, that they would punish religious error as treason, when those in whom it is found are as much distinguished by their loyalty and usefulness as subjects, as they are remarkable for their fidelity to a system of pure and innocent dogmatism. Had either Francis or Charles V. been simply intent on preserving the unity of the ruling Church, their conduct would have exhibited the overpowering influence of sentiments but seldom prominent in any of their measures. Francis, therefore, when he refused that justice to the Waldenses which they had every reason to demand, may be supposed to have acted under the strong in-

\* “Ille ergo questione habita sic reperiebat, Valdenses, qui dicuntur, homines esse, qui CCC circiter abhinc annis asperum et incultum solum vectigale a dominis acceperint, quod improbo labore et assiduo cultu frugum ferax et aptum pecori reddiderint; patientissimos eos laboris et inediæ; a litibus abhorrentes, erga egenos munes esse; tributa principi et sua jura dominis sedulo et summa fide pendere: Dei cultum assiduis precibus et morum innocentia præ se ferre; cæterum raro Divorum templa adire, nisi si quando ad vicinia suis finibus oppida mercandi aut negotiorum causa divertant. Quo si quandoque pedem inferant, non Dei Divorumve statu advoli; nec cereos eis aut donaria ulla ponere: non sacerdotes ab eis rogari, ut pro se aut propinquorum manibus rem divinam faciant: non cruce frontem insignire, uti aliorum moris est: cum cælum intonat non se lustrali aqua aspergere, sed sublatis in cælum oculis Dei opem implorare: non religionis ergo peregre proficisci; non per vias ante crucium simulacra caput aperire: sacra alio ritu et populari lingua celebrare: non denique pontifici aut episcopis honorem deferre; sed quosdam e suo numero delectos pro antistitibus et doctoribus habere.”—Thuani Hist., t. i., lib. VI., p. 224.

fluence of persuasions which, possessing some power in themselves, owed a yet greater degree of authority to the circumstances of the times.

The Waldenses obtained, apparently, no real advantage from their appeal to the royal clemency. They were allowed only three months' respite. During this time it was for them to consider whether they would renounce their faith, or submit to the punishment originally adjudged them. Should they come to the former resolution, they were to appear before the Archbishop of Aix, and from him to seek absolution, and permission to join themselves to the communion of the faithful. At the moment when ruin appeared ready to fall upon the inhabitants of the valleys, they were saved, for a time, by one of those strange circumstances which occur to teach us how a feather can drive back the current of a whirlwind when God makes it an instrument of His will. The first president of the parliament of Aix had written a book, in which he related the following incident. While he was practising as an advocate in the city of Autun, it happened that the rats so multiplied in the province, that the buildings, and all the produce of the lands, seemed daily in danger of being utterly destroyed. As all the means which prudence could suggest had hitherto availed nothing against the invaders, the Vicar-general was sent for to excommunicate them. Sentence was just about to be passed, when some of the members of the council suggested that it would have an appearance of injustice, if the rats were condemned before they had been allowed to make their defence, or plead some extenuation of their crimes. "Upon this," said the President, "as I was at that time an almost briefless pleader, I volunteered my services to the rats, and became their advocate. I contended that they had not been summoned according to law; that the interests of the whole race of rats was about to be compromised by the guilt of a few; and that if the offenders did not appear to answer the charges laid against them, it might be accounted for by the fact, that every passage to the court was filled with cats, their well-known deadly enemies." When the



president was about to urge on the process against the unfortunate Waldenses, a nobleman with whom he was intimate reminded him of this story, and that he had often heard him say he was indebted for much of his subsequent good fortune to the skill with which he had defended the rats. "But if," added the nobleman, "you felt gratified in employing your ability successfully to save rats, ought you not to feel infinitely more anxious to use your influence for delivering a multitude of your own afflicted and unjustly persecuted fellow-creatures?"\*

Whether Chassanee was flattered, convinced or shamed by this appeal, we know not; but it had the happy effect of softening his temper, and retarding the speed of the bloodhounds who were already on their course. He not only refrained from acts of violence himself, but employed his abilities and authority in diminishing the number of the declared enemies of the Waldenses. By these means, although much misery was suffered,† the expected persecution was deprived of its worst terrors. The oppressed people, who had every hour looked for the approach of their barbarous pursuers, remained, for the most part, undisturbed in their homes. Every pause in the tempest led them to hope that it had exhausted its strength; and, as five years were allowed to pass by, there was reason to believe that they might again repose in the tranquillity of better times.

But the success of Chassanee was owing, in great part, to the placable dispositions of the other ministers, invested, like him, with a portion of royal authority. The accession of the Baron John Minerus Oppeda put an end at once to the hopes of the Waldenses, and to the fair examination of the principles which they professed. New efforts were made to oblige the King to execute the decrees passed in 1540. In order to awaken his indignation against the accused, the crime

\* Thuani Hist., t. i., liv. VI., p. 221; Gerdesii, t. iv., p. 131.

† Sed fuit hæc persecutio, licet horrenda supra modum et atrox intentaretur, ingentemque terrorem miseris afferret hominibus, tamen ludus præ illa, quæ quarto post anno 1545 secuta fuit.—Gerdes., t. iv., p. 135.

of treason was laid to their charge, in addition to the old and almost worn-out allegation of heresy.\* They were represented as being ready to imitate the Swiss, and to claim for themselves not only religious but political independence. For this purpose, it was said, they had collected a band, and were preparing to march upon Marseilles, which they hoped to surprise, and make the chief place of their new territory. The King manifested a facility of belief in hearkening to these reports, which ought not to have been looked for in a sensible and experienced monarch; but his orders now went forth breathing a fiercer spirit than ever; and they found the parliament of Aix thirsting with a corresponding ardour for liberty to renew its attacks. Minerius Oppeda read the letters of the King in a full assembly of the parliament on the 12th of April. They had been, it appears, three months in his hands before he deemed it wise to make them public. The time lost by this delay was to be made up by a corresponding increase of activity. Officers were, therefore, immediately chosen from the parliament, to whom was to be intrusted the execution of the royal mandates. Oppeda volunteered his services as their leader; and, under his auspices, things were quickly in a state for the commencement of operations. The war with England had obliged the King to make an extensive levy of troops throughout the whole of the southern provinces. These were already in arms, and stood prepared to obey the first summons to march. Oppeda, with the ready genius for mischief which has generally distinguished the most famous in the ranks of persecutors, instantly seized upon the advantage which this circumstance afforded him, and called the well-trained bands to his assistance in his war upon the peasants of the valleys. To the troops thus collected, were soon added others engaged in the service of the Pope; and the armament presented an appearance which might have been formidable even to a people prepared for war by long acquaintance with its arts.

\* Thuani, t. i., liv. VI., p. 225. Minerius reported that not fewer than sixteen thousand men were prepared to march against Marseilles.

The army now began its operations, led forward by Oppeda and his associates. Cadeno was the first place attacked; and the whole surrounding district was speedily laid waste, presenting a most miserable spectacle of burning villages, and crowds of wretched people, endeavouring to escape with what fragments of furniture could be saved from their ruined homes. Merindol, the chief town in the neighbourhood, was the next to be assailed; its inhabitants saw the village at a little distance enveloped in flames; the cries of the sufferers soon reached their doors, and they learnt that it was the purpose of the ruthless persecutor to wreak upon them the whole of his unsatiated fury. Flight offered the only means of safety; the terrified people poured forth in a mass from the town, and, seeking the woods, hurried forward till they reached the village of Saintfalaise. There they had hoped to find a temporary shelter; but the alarm had already reached the sequestered hamlet; the poor people stood at their doors ready for flight;\* and the united companies pursued their way weeping and wailing, and becoming more and more sensible of their misery, as their numbers continually increased.

While endeavouring to escape from the enemy behind, famine stared them in the face every step they set. Oppeda had issued an order, rendering it a capital offence for any one to aid the wretched fugitives, by giving them food or shelter. They soon, therefore, discovered that it would be impossible for them to journey long; the robust, who had to aid the sick and aged in surmounting the hills, began to faint with fatigue; and mothers seemed to be striving in vain to save their children from the sword, dying, as they appeared to be, with hunger, on their bosoms. Having, at length, reached a place which promised them temporary safety, they held a debate as to the course which it might be best to pursue. But scarcely had they entered upon the consideration, when intelligence was brought

\* "It was the bishop of Cauvallo whom these poor people had to dread; he had given particular authority to certain persons to slaughter them."—Gerdesii, t. iv., p. 159.



that Oppeda was pursuing them, and would soon reach their retreat. There was no hope of escape, should he arrive before they had left the place. Resistance was impossible, and mercy was unknown to the persecutor. In the terror of the moment, a decision was adopted, which indicates at once the misery of their condition. Those who could still journey on, or who had reason to believe themselves the particular objects of Oppeda's hatred, were to set out immediately; and the women and children, with the sick, were to be left in their present shelter, and this, because it was considered that their utter helplessness, and freedom from the responsibilities of the dispute, would save them from the rage of the pursuers. The parting of husbands and wives, of children and aged parents, was one of the saddest scenes that the history of persecution can afford. But fear urged both parties to separate; and those who were to continue their route hastened towards Mussi. They walked all night, and when the morning dawned, were arrived on the summit of Mount Lebero. Here they paused to catch, if possible, some sign of what was taking place in the district which they had just left. The glimmering of fires on all sides sent terror to their hearts; they knew that the work of destruction was still in progress; and there were those among them who would doubtlessly have far rather been encountering the dangers of their families and their brethren, than their present agonies of helpless suspense, and unavailing grief. Their worst anticipations were realized. The soldiers under Oppeda had soon reached the spot where the sick, the aged, and the women had sought refuge. Such was the effect of the representations made respecting their supposed heresy, that the ignorant multitude, armed with a brief authority, seemed to rejoice in the opportunity of shedding their blood, or perpetrating enormities which indicate still more frightfully the degrading influence of a zeal not governed by charity. The whole of the fugitives from Merindol would probably have perished in this manner, had it not been for the pity of one of the soldiers in the army of Oppeda. This brave and compassionate man, finding that the

love of slaughter was every hour increasing, escaped from his companions, and, secretly ascending a jutting point of rock, which overhung the valley where the fugitives were seated, hurled down two masses of stone, which, falling in the midst of the path through the defile, warned the people of their danger. A few hasty words explained to them more fully the nature of their situation. By this timely warning many escaped the fury of Oppeda and his barbarous followers; but the desolation of the country, and the blood shed, was amply sufficient to satisfy the vengeance of the most sanguinary persecutor. Merindol, deserted by its inhabitants, offered, on the arrival of the enemy, but one victim to the sword. This was a young man, who could not be persuaded to leave the place. Oppeda, grieving that he had lost the opportunity of sacrificing the multitude to his horrible zeal, spent all that he could of his wrath on this solitary sufferer. In the same manner, when he could not satisfy himself with the slaughter of a sufficient number of men in the town of Cabriera, he directed his rage against the women of the place. About forty of these had taken refuge in a barn from the fury of the soldiers. This was no sooner known, than he ordered a quantity of hay and straw to be piled around the building, and then set fire to. Nearly suffocated by the volleys of smoke, the unfortunate women rushed terrified forth; but Oppeda had taken care to provide against their escape. They were immediately assailed by swords and darts, and forced back into the burning edifice, in which they all perished.

About twenty-two towns and villages were completely destroyed in these infamous proceedings. The dispersion of the inhabitants left the district for a considerable time, waste and solitary. A large number of the unfortunate people lay butchered among the rocks, or in the small plains which had yielded so many plentiful harvests to their laborious industry.\* Others had perished in the course of their flight; and the re-

\* Maimbourg himself makes no attempt to conceal the horrors perpetrated on this occasion. "The miserable creatures," he says, "who had sheltered themselves in the woods, not finding any fruit, it being the month

mainder were seeking a home either in Switzerland or Germany, where they might, if possible, forget the horrors of their defenceless state under a free and righteous system of lawful government.

From this melancholy episode in the early history of the Reformation in France, we turn in vain for refreshment to the narrative of other events in that country. Every year offered some fresh proof of the fierce struggles which the spirit of persecution was making for a complete emancipation from the trammels of mercy and justice. Many were the individual victims, from time to time, sacrificed to its decrees; besides these, the town of Meaux afforded a band of sufferers sufficiently large to show how ready it was to gorge a multitude as well as a single victim. Notwithstanding the storm which had raged against the first reformers in that town, it had continued to retain the seeds of the gospel, and to rejoice with a secret but thankful joy, as the dew of the divine blessing nurtured them into a vigorous growth. For some time the few that recognized the value of heavenly truth contented themselves with performing their simple services in the most sequestered spots of the adjoining country. At length about sixty of them determined on forming themselves into a church, and appointing a minister. Their numbers soon increased to several hundreds; and their simple worship was conducted in the house of Stephen Mange, an aged and respectable citizen, who was willing to encounter the danger of martyrdom that he might facilitate the preaching of the gospel.

In the month of September, 1546, the magistrates of the town came to the determination of subjecting the little congregation to a trial of faith as terrible as intolerance could invent. The prefect, accompanied by a great concourse of the ministers of justice, sought the

of April, and no one being allowed to succour them, on pain of death, nearly all died of hunger, the robust saving themselves, but leaving their wives and children." By a computation, set down by the same author, three thousand persons are stated to have perished in the persecution; five hundred of the strongest men were selected for the gallies; twenty-four villages were sacked by the soldiers, and nine hundred houses burnt to the ground.—*Hist. du Calvinisme*, p. 89.



house of Stephen Mange, at the hour of the evening when it was known the people were assembled at their service. At the moment they entered, their preacher, Peter Clerk, was expounding a passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. On the magistrates inquiring, what such a multitude was doing away from their parishes, the minister replied, "Thou see'st what we are doing: but wait till we have finished our service." "You must go to prison," was the answer. "Let us go then, if it be the will of God," replied Clerk; and he offered himself to be bound. The quiet and resigned conduct of the minister was imitated by the flock, and sixty-two persons, men and women, were, the same night, thrown into the public prison.\* They had, probably, expected this fate; and so far were they from being subdued in spirit, that they accompanied their guards through the streets, singing with a loud and cheerful voice the seventy-ninth psalm.

After having been subjected to many rude and unskilful examinations before the authorities of Meaux, the prisoners were sent, bound in carts, to Paris. No mercy was shown them in this journey; they were not allowed even straw to rest on; and no time was given for the least repose on the road. As many of them were of infirm health, it was with difficulty they sustained the fatigue; but their hearts were strengthened by the joyful feeling that they were glorifying God in their tribulations; and they entered Paris singing psalms, and testifying, by their whole deportment, that they were worthy to follow in the train of those who had already offered up themselves on the altar of Christ.

The trial of the prisoners took place before the chief tribunal of the kingdom; but its issue was not more consistent with mercy or equity than it might have been expected to be had it proceeded from the most ignorant of the provincial courts. Fourteen of the

\* The rebuke which one of the younger females addressed to the magistrate is recorded by the historians of these times as a favourite anecdote:—"Si vos me in lupanari deprehendissetis, aut in loco pudendo, nunquam me his vinculis constringendam curassetis."—Beza, *Hist. Eccles.* t. i., p. 50; *Gerdessii*, t. iv., p. 163.

accused were condemned to be burnt alive. These holy men owed their pre-eminence in the sentence to the admirable constancy of their faith, and the clearness of their confession. The others were allotted punishments according to a scale graduated on the principle thus established. The less faithful and intelligent were condemned to be publicly whipped; others were to be sent into exile in addition to this punishment; and all were to be obliged to witness the burning of their more heroic companions, as a fate from which they had been delivered by the exceeding leniency of their judges. Even the house of the venerable Stephen Mange was not forgotten in the sentence; it was ordered to be levelled with the ground, that the eyes of posterity might not be offended at the sight of an edifice so horribly infected. Still further to secure this object, it was directed that a chapel should be built on the spot, and that mass should be celebrated there every Thursday.

Some fear appears to have been entertained by most persecutors, that they might gain little advantage from the slaughter of those who continued faithful to their profession; but that their cause would rather suffer, when dying men could sternly and unshrinkingly declare its baseness. To lessen, if possible, this danger, the fourteen condemned to be burnt were ordered to be separated from each other, and distributed among the several monasteries, under the care of those who, it was supposed, might be able to make them recant. The experiment was made in vain; and its failure served to fill the minds of the persecutors with feelings of deeper wrath. At length the day arrived for sending the sufferers back to Meaux, where, it was decided, they ought to be executed, as a terror to the infected district. The journey afforded the enraged zealots fresh opportunities for the exercise of their cruelty. Two doctors of the Sorbonne, Maillard and Picart, were appointed to attend them. Seated on their mules, these dignitaries of the University employed themselves in pouring out volleys of abuse against the prisoners, or in decrying the doctrines for which they suffered. Wearied beyond

endurance with the horrid ribaldry of Picart, Peter Clerk at last exclaimed, "Depart from us, Satan ! nor longer prevent our meditating on God's goodness towards us."

On passing through the woods, about ten miles from Paris, they were addressed by a man, who ran after the carriage, and ceased not to exhort them to retain their firmness, and look confidently for the reward of their faith in the kingdom of glory. For some time he remained unnoticed by those at the head of the company, but as soon as his voice reached their ears, and the purport of his language was understood, the doctors of the Sorbonne had him seized, and, without waiting for further evidence, ordered him to be thrown into the vehicle among the other prisoners. Their new companion, in nowise disheartened by this sudden loss of his freedom, continued with unabated cheerfulness to urge upon their consideration every motive to patience and courage. The least resolute among them felt the influence of his generous ardour. Their spirits rose as they heard him speaking in triumphant tones of the joys which attend the suffering servants of Christ in another world. They recovered their first feelings of confidence in the power of the gospel. For a time they had shrunk with mingled astonishment and affright from the sorrows which awaited them. The many hours of quiet spiritual worship which they had enjoyed in their secret meetings about Meaux had beguiled them into a feeling of security ; and the younger and the more timid among them had but badly prepared themselves for the actual endurance of suffering. It was a mercy, therefore, and they felt it to be so, that the stranger, full as he was of faith, had been sent them for a companion.

The arrival of the prisoners at Meaux had been eagerly expected by the inflamed multitude. Torments of the most fearful kind were invented to try their power of suffering ; but while the spectacle of resignation was as noble as any that were seen in the most remarkable days of persecution, it neither satisfied the tormentors, nor softened their hearts. The inflictions of



agony were multiplied by an ingenuity which seems to have increased in the same proportion as the patience of the sufferers. One of the boldest of the number, observing the efforts made to redouble his pains, cried out, in the midst of the torture, "proceed; spare not this wretched body, which has so often resisted the Spirit and will of its Creator."

A disputation, as useless to one party as to the other, was held after the infliction of these sufferings. The usual arguments were advanced, and answered; but it was not on the strength of their reasonings that the cause of the accused could depend, at this stage of the proceedings against them. They were already condemned; and neither logic nor theology could have availed to stop the piles from being lit which were now prepared to receive them. At two o'clock on the afternoon of the day appointed for their execution, they were brought out of the prison. Stephen Mange was the first addressed by the executioner; he was ordered to put forth his tongue, and it was immediately cut off. Still able, however, to murmur a few words intelligible to anxious listeners, he said thrice, "God's name be praised." Peter Clerk was the next led out, and underwent a similar infliction. The rest followed in order; and the whole were conveyed on hurdles or in waggons to the public square. There fourteen separate piles were placed in a circle, and in a brief space of time the martyrs passed through the dreadful scene of their trial to their everlasting reward. The next day Picart, who was anxious still further to improve the lesson to the people of Meaux, conducted a solemn procession to the spot where the execution had taken place. A splendid canopy was raised, under which this representative of the Sorbonne was to make his address; and the fires were still burning, shooting out their pale light in the face of the sun, over the ashes of the martyrs. The discourse of Picart was in close keeping with the spirit of his order; he declared that it was necessary to salvation that the spectators should believe that the heretics who had lately suffered were now in the depths of hell: that if an angel from heaven should come and say the con-

trary, he ought to be rejected; and that God would not be God, if he did not condemn them to eternal misery.\*

The little community of evangelical believers at Meaux was broken up by these barbarities; but the cause of the gospel appears to have gained rather than lost by the event. Several earnest and well-instructed believers were thereby sent into other parts of France; and they went forth with that mixture of sadness and ardour, with those fondly-cherished recollections of heroic holiness, which the friends of martyrs only can enjoy; and in the desire of their hearts to follow examples so dear and venerable, they both performed the work of God, and confounded the power and subtlety of their adversaries. The occurrences which thus manifested the temper of the two parties actually engaged in the conflict, attracted the notice of the German Protestants in a painful manner. It was suspected at the time that the enemies of the Reformation had induced Francis to give his assent to the late persecution, that an effectual obstacle might thereby be raised to his forming an alliance with the league of Smalcalde.† However this may be, the guilt of his advisers seems to have been the greater. Francis was not a persecutor by nature; and though it is impossible to excuse a monarch who allows himself to be led into the perpetration of injustice; yet we cannot look upon him with the same horror as we do upon those whose craft betrayed his weakness, or who set his fears at work, that they might make his authority the instrument of their iniquity. The mind of this distinguished, but neither great nor wise monarch, was capable of cherishing the noblest sentiments; his early patronage of literature; the snatches of attention which he gave to the appeals

\* Beza, *Hist. Eccles.*, t. i., p. 52; Gerdesii, t. iv., p. 169; *Act et Monum.* Mar. l. c., p. 119.

† Sleidan, *Hist. de la Reform.*, t. ii., liv. XVIII., p. 384. The same author mentions, that shortly before his death, Francis had sent to the Elector of Saxony, and to the Landgrave, one hundred thousand gold crowns, to assist them in the war which they had just undertaken in support of their interests. This might be done from a political calculation, rather than from a motive of religious tolerance; but it was not the act of a zealot, or a very determined persecutor.—*Liv. XIX.*, p. 409.

of the Protestants, and his general kindness of disposition, afforded hopes, which sometimes overcame experience, that he could not be permanently held in bondage by dark and cruel prejudices. Though practically the generous tendencies of his mind produced no advantage to the cause of religion, the sentiments with which he is said to have reviewed the conduct of his ministers, and his own too easy belief of their arguments, may encourage the belief that, had he been less beset by men and circumstances, both equally unfavourable to religious liberty, he would have fallen into few of the sins which he committed against the consciences of his people. The conduct of Oppeda was viewed by him with equal anger and disgust, and Oppeda presented no other features than such as were common to the whole family of persecutors. If Francis hated him, he must in his heart have hated all; and that he cherished in his more serious moments the holier sentiments of mercy and justice, may be gathered from his dying admonitions to his son. The recollection of the unfortunate Waldenses pressed heavily on his heart even to the last; and, if history speaks true, he left it, as his latest request, that the authors of the persecution might be punished to the uttermost. Oppeda was ultimately thrown into prison, from which he only escaped through the influence of the Duke of Guise. But the power of the mightiest cannot deliver those whom God has determined to punish.\* The wretched persecutor lingered through a life marked by disappointment and misery, and died as miserable a death as the calamities of a wicked life could prognosticate. Guerin, the advocate-general, who had equally distinguished himself in the persecution of the reformers, was hung; and a corresponding fate appears to have attended most of the actors engaged in these degrading proceedings. Unfortunately, the vexation which Francis suffered on account of the Waldenses did not prevent the continuance of persecution in other parts of his dominions. The Protestants of Meaux, we have seen, suffered as severely

\* "The justice of heaven," says the amiable De Thou, "supplied the justice of the world."



as the inhabitants of the valleys; and Sens, Angers, and other cities, sent forth those sanguinary rivulets, which in a few years were to be increased into torrents of blood, fed equally by civil war and the sacrifices of religious hate.

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## CHAP. VII.

### STATE OF THE REFORMATION IN FRANCE—ENGLAND— AT THE OPENING OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

THE death of Francis I.\* brought into open operation the various forces which had hitherto worked with a limited and concealed force in the heart of the kingdom. A youthful monarch, like Henry II., would be naturally less ready, to receive as an inheritance the monitory experience of his father, than anxious to secure the means of splendour and self-gratification, which had characterized his earlier years. The favourites of a court, restored to the favour which they had lost for a season, are the most dangerous companions that a new sovereign can choose. They bring with them resentments, factious politics, and an incurable selfishness. But in the case of Henry II., his choice, in one instance, at least, was so wise, that hopes might have been entertained that his reign would prove far more useful, if not more glorious, than that of his lamented father. The Constable, Anne de Montmorenci, had been banished from the court, under the suspicion that he was too favourable to the views of the Emperor; but he was a man whose sternness and integrity would have rendered him one of the best advisers that an inexperienced monarch could have chosen, had he but possessed that one quality which, in inferior minds, is so often found to abound in excess, a sufficient confidence in the power of his own reasonings, or in the force of honesty. In this he failed; and, mistrusting his influence with

\* March 31, 1547.

Henry, he consented to share his power with the celebrated Diana of Poitiers, Duchess de Valentinois. The court of the new monarch soon became the scene of disgraceful intrigue. Literature and science, which had begun to flourish under the patronage of the late King, found they had lost their best patron; and toleration, which had expected much from the dying words of Francis, saw that it must, indeed, be left to Heaven, not to princes, to avenge the cause of his people.\*

Such was the state of affairs in France when the Council of Trent prepared to discuss, in the face of the Christian world, the most important questions of religious truth. From France were to come several of the disputants, who were regarded as endowed with the power of greatly influencing the issue of the debate. To the state of their Church, therefore, or of the opinions most prevalent among them, we refer with feelings of no ordinary interest; and in the broad current of argument and sentiment to be contemplated in the history of the Council, the attentive inquirer will look for their influence as one of the impelling forces of the stream.

From the consideration of the state of France at this period, we turn to that of England at the same time. This country presented an opening for the teachers of the gospel, which had been already occupied by men of acknowledged piety and learning. Robert Grosseteste in the thirteenth, and Wickliffe at the close of the fourteenth century, had led the way for several successive bands of enlightened teachers, who, according to the necessities of their respective periods, attacked first one, and then another class of Romish errors. But England was a stronghold of superstition; and it was not by the labours of a few pious men, however sincere themselves, that the dense mass of the people's ignorance could be penetrated. The power of Rome continued so great, that

\* "Such a massacre," says Lacroix, alluding to the late persecutions, "was a frightful novelty to men whom Louis XII., and Francis himself, had habituated only to noble emotions. It is suspected that Henry II. and the constable Montmorency, in commencing proceedings against Oppède, and the rest, aimed rather at the Cardinal de Tournon, whom they desired to ruin, than at the real authors of the crime."—*Hist. de France*, t. i., liv. I., p. 31.

the money drawn from the nation to supply its demands, often exceeded the whole revenue of the King. Such a fact proves not merely the consent of the government to the oppressive rule of the dominant church, but the willing slavery of the people. The efforts of Wickliffe produced important results, but they were not immediate; nor would they, it is probable, have been produced at all, had it not been for a train of subsequent circumstances, which, like fertilizing dew on seed sown deep in the earth, gave life and vigour to the design. Though we look with admiration at those who suffered in the cause of the gospel, which Wickliffe had made known in the country, and are thankful that even a few could be found so willing to die for the glory of Divine truth, yet it cannot be denied that the country was in a deplorable condition, which could only furnish such a small number of converts to the preached word, and could so soon sink back, as to all apparent circumstances, into the apathy of spiritual slavery. The barbarities perpetrated upon the followers of the early reformer, excited no feeling in the nation that expressed itself in any audible tones. Its deepest resentments were only whispered, and were heard but in obscure retreats. Unlike the people of a later age, the English of this period seemed purposed to keep their hearts closed against the noble appeals which were made to their best and warmest sympathies. They saw the fires lit which were to consume men whose hearts were a treasury of generous virtues; they came to witness their execution, as a spectacle which had nothing to do with their own interests and hopes; and when the flames had reduced the martyr and the crumbling pile to ashes, they returned to their homes and to their breviaries, without a thought of inquiring what were the reasons for which these heroic sufferers so willingly gave their lives.

But small as was the number of those who received the gospel as of more worth than all the traditions which had assumed the character of apostolic or catholic, they were sufficient to diffuse through the kingdom much of that species of information, out of



which questions arise, or are formed by the ever active intellect of mankind. The intelligence which is comprehended and valued by a few only, and those the most enlightened of the world, will seldom want even its direct uses to society at large. Though not received as imparting information, it may act irresistibly in exciting attention ; and when it has performed this latter office, the mere instrument of excitement may become the strength and nourishment of the mind. This appears to have been the case with the teaching of the first English Reformers. No adequate result followed their efforts, in the first instance ; but had they not laboured, we should probably have had to look in vain for those glorious harvests which sprung up, as it seemed instantaneously, in the sixteenth century. Wickliffe's translation of the Scriptures was the most substantial of the means that had been supplied for the improvement of the nation. But even this operated with a slow and almost indiscernible influence, so far as the great body of the people were concerned. The opportunities of circulation were few ; and the desire of increasing them existed not, as yet, in any of those powerful bodies whose influence might be sufficient to overcome the obstacles common to the age. Among the people themselves the wish for instruction was not sufficiently strong to set them upon those wonderful contrivances which a thoroughly-awakened community will invent for the recovery of its spiritual rights, or for the security of its advancement according to the laws of mental and moral independence. The efforts, therefore, of Wickliffe and his followers were attended by no important changes ; they led to the saving of many souls, but not to the moving of the multitude, or to the modifying of the sentiments which lay at the foundation of its religious character. Those who received the waters of life stood apart from the community. They were not thrust forward, as it were, by a general movement for which they were better prepared, or to which they were more susceptible than others ; but had separated themselves by a species of violence from the mass, like small fragments broken off from the corners of an edifice ; and when

they had been sanctified and enlightened under the converting influences of the gospel, they did not become amalgamated again with the people at large, but remained separate and distinct, a peculiar, and for the most part, an unknown and hated people.

That the light which a faithful preacher of God's Word sets up is an inextinguishable light, was never more clearly proved than in the case of Wickliffe. While the nation offered no sanctuary to those who rejoiced in its revelations, but willingly seconded the violence of its rulers, either by engaging in the persecution, or looking on with stupid admiration while the the noblest of its patriots were led to the slaughter, the illuminating rays continued to diffuse themselves, and both men and women were found ready to die rather than shut their eyes to the growing light. The sufferings of the Lollards, as the followers of Wickliffe so began to be called, form the subject of many a melancholy page in the history of the English Church.\* At the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII. the opinions of Wickliffe were manifestly prevalent throughout the kingdom; but the record of abjurations also becomes frequent in the accounts of that period; and it is to be concluded, therefore, either that the increase of the sect was more rapid and alarming than it was in former days, and consequently forced itself upon the notice of the clergy, or that the clergy themselves, anticipating, by a strange presentiment of coming change, the events about to happen, were more vigilant in the examination of men's pursuits and doctrines. Six men and four women were examined before Archbishop Warham in

\* The persecution did not, it seems, immediately commence, or at least not with any degree of sanguinary violence. "I find none," says the historian of these times, "which were put to death, therefore, during the reign of this King, Richard the Second. Whereby it is to be thought of this King, that although he cannot be utterly excused for molesting the godly and innocent preachers of that time, yet neither was he so cruel against them as others that came after him; and that which he did seemed to proceed by the instigation of the Pope and other bishops, rather than either by the consent of his parliament or advice of his council about him, or else by his own nature." The same writer observes, "King Henry the Fourth, who was the deposer of King Richard, was the first of all English Kings that began the unmerciful burning of Christ's saints for standing against the Pope."—Wordsworth's *Eccles. Biog.*, t. i., p. 100.

the month of May, 1511. They were accused of denying the real presence ; of speaking irreverently of baptism and confirmation, of the priesthood and of confessions. Other opinions of a similar kind were laid to their charge ; and it appears that they had mixed with the sentiments which might have been derived from instruction in the gospel, many others which could only have arisen from the licentiousness of ignorance. This mixture of error must have greatly weakened the supports of their faith ; and it is not a matter of surprise that they renounced, at the instigation of the Archbishop, whatever were the doctrines of their party. The same course was taken by many others, and they submitted to the degrading punishment assigned them, with the most submissive humility. A faggot in flames painted on their garments, and to be worn to the end of their lives, was to show to all the world that they were brands snatched from the burning. Some failed of convincing the judges that they were sincere in wishing to be restored to the peace of the Church. The probability is, that in such cases the secular power was employed to punish the offence which the wisdom of the ecclesiastical body could not remove. But at a time when there appears to have been no unwillingness to inflict the heaviest penalties of the law, it is remarkable that so few should have suffered ; and we shall not, perhaps, be far from the truth, if we conjecture, that the want of watchfulness on the part of the Church had been greater for some years past than formerly, and that the sect, growing in numbers, but not in real strength, during the interval of repose, presented, when the attack was renewed, a wide front to the assailants, but one as weak as it was wide.

The influence of Wickliffe's doctrines would probably, if left to itself, have never been found sufficient to effect more than a few isolated conversions, few, that is, when compared with the millions of souls that form the bulk of a mighty nation, and each of which it is the object of a church to enlighten and cherish. True it is that a very eager desire had been expressed for the Scriptures. They began to be regarded as the fountain of religious



knowledge ; and many there were, it is said, who did not hesitate to offer sums for a few pages of the Bible, which would now purchase a hundred complete copies of the Scriptures. But while this is a most happy sign of the awakened attention of some, it ought not to be too readily viewed as indicating the state of the country in general. Had such a desire for the Scriptures been commonly felt, it would be difficult to believe that any policy of the Church could have prevented the circulation of the Word of God, or that, with such an ardent thirst for waters drawn from the wells of salvation, the people could have been kept for more than a century quiet under the fraud and oppression which denied them the means of life. But while it required the operations of many and extraordinary auxiliary powers to carry forward the work of religious reformation, the common causes of national improvement were gradually increasing in activity, and by them, an unobserved portion of the elements of Christ's government, the way was opened for a more ready circulation of heavenly truth. The age of Henry VIII. presented a very different aspect to that of Richard II. or the two Henrys, by whom he was succeeded. Although the country was still to wait long before any clear notion could be formed of constitutional liberty, the necessity of improvement began to be felt. Printing had arrived at a sufficient degree of perfection to be made serviceable in the cause of universal instruction. The questions of deepest import to the hearts of men were now to be quickly answered, not in the language of dogmatism, or by some one stern and authoritative voice, but by a hundred witnesses to the truth, each bringing his information confirming justifying facts, and speaking not as one commanding assent, but as solemnly summoned to the bar of humanity and reason, there to address mankind with all reverence and affection.

Luther's writings made their way into England at an early period. They were, perhaps, in most respects better calculated to rouse a heathful attention to the great points of evangelical religion than the writings of Wickliffe. Those of the latter were rather for chas-

tisement and correction than for instruction. Mendicant friars and a corrupt clergy might tremble beneath the lash of Wickliffe. Many of the doctrines of the Roman Church might be successfully controverted by his powerful mind; but it required the flooding fulness of exposition and exhortation, which characterizes a large portion of Luther's writings, to engage the people in a contest with spiritual oppressors.

The effect of the communications which now took place between the Reformers of Germany and those who were willing to receive the pure Word of God in this country, was great and conspicuous. It did not fail to attract the notice of the government, and a severe search was made for suspected heretics. The circulation of Tindal's translation of the New Testament produced a further alarm. It was described as falsifying Scripture by heretical glosses, and the bishops issued a proclamation which required every clergyman to see that his people delivered up whatever copies they might have of this translation, or of the other books of Tindal, to the vicar-general. Disobedience to this order was to be punished by excommunication; and so little prepared yet were the English Reformers for meeting times of trouble, that Bilney himself was induced to recant, and deny his faith in the doctrines which he had learnt in studying the New Testament with his friend Latimer at Cambridge.\*

\* The doctrines which Bilney was accused of teaching were purely evangelical, and were collected from statements made in his sermons. Thus it was deposed, that he had said, when preaching in Christ's Church, Ipswich, "Our Saviour Christ is our mediator between us and the Father; what should we need, then, to seek any saint for remedy? Wherefore it is great injury to the blood of Christ to make such petitions, and blasphemeth our Saviour. That man is so imperfect of himself, that he can in no wise merit by his own deeds." Also, "The coming of Christ was prophesied before, and desired by the prophets. But John Baptist, being more than a prophet, did not only prophecy, but with his finger shewed him, saying, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.'" Then if this were the very Lamb, which John did demonstrate, that taketh away the sins of the world, what injury is it to our Saviour Christ, that to be buried in St. Francis' cowle should remit four parts of penance? What is then left to our Saviour Christ, which taketh away the sins of the world? This I will justify to be a great blasphemy to the blood of Christ." Also, "That it was a great folly to go on pilgrimages; and that preachers in times past have been antichrists, and now it hath pleased God somewhat to show forth their

It is happily not necessary to our subject that we should pursue the painful narrative of the events which brought the King into open controversy with Rome. The common opinion, that it was to Henry's domestic feelings that his subjects were indebted for the emancipation of their church, has been so strongly supported, that a doubt on the point seems hardly to be tolerated. Yet we cannot help thinking that a vast deal more of importance has been ascribed to this point than it deserves. Henry was not a monarch likely to depend on one motive alone to urge him into a course favourable to his interests and independence. The principle of opposition to Rome had been most clearly established in the Statute of Provisos; and though the circumstances of the preceding reigns, or the views of the sovereign, had prevented the proper action of the principle, yet, there it was, and, as the clergy found to their cost, not deprived of one particle of its strength, however long left in desuetude. What Henry did for asserting his supremacy in the national church needed no other beginning than the simple discovery that he could do it; and for this discovery the age afforded many opportunities. The people groaned under a tyranny which pressed, at the same time, with equal force on the shoulders of the King. By setting them free, he would be gaining liberty for himself; and it needed little more than the experience which Wolsey's legantine ministrations had given him, to inspire his mind with a wish to try his force in the assertion of independent power. In reality, Henry's plans for effecting a reformation were so selfish and imperfect, that had it not been for aids which he had no share in raising up, the kingdom would, immediately after his decease, have relapsed into all the darkness of its former state. His own selfish pride, and desire of replenishing his coffers, were the stimulants which kept him in action. The insecurity of the spiritual treasures committed to the Church remained almost as great as

falsehood and errors!" Besides these things, he was also accused of speaking against the worship of saints, and saying that there had been no good Pope for five hundred years.—Wordsworth, *Ecclesiastical Biog.*, t. ii., p. 19.



ever. A new defender of the faith had arisen, who professed to put down the oppressors of truth; but, with a daring inconsistency, he assumed to himself the right of stopping inquiry at whatever point he chose, and of punishing those who had a clearer sight than his. It is remarkable that the same monarch who had thrown off allegiance to the Pope, and who in 1531 had not only obliged the clergy to acknowledge him supreme head of the Church, but to pay a vast sum for their violation of the Statute of Provisos, should continue to persecute the very men who had first taught the world to dispute the sovereignty of Rome.

Henry was employed for three years in carrying on the twofold project of obtaining a divorce from his queen, and establishing by law his claim to the title of head of the Church. Fisher, bishop of Rochester,\* and Sir Thomas More,† were the only firm opponents to his will; but their opposition availed little; and in the session of parliament held November and December 1534, the King became legally the head of the English Church. To the clause which proclaimed him "supreme head in earth, of the Church of England," was added another, of vast importance in the times when it originated. By this it was declared, "that the King

\* Fisher and others appear to have long watched with a jealous eye the attempts of the State upon the Church. Stow, in speaking of the parliament held 1523, says:—"As there was much ado amongst them of the Common house, about their agreement to the subsidy then required, so was there as hard hold for awhile among them of the clergy in the convocation-house, namely, Richard Fone, bishop of Winchester, and John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, held sore against it; but, worst of all, Sir Rowland Philips, vicar of Crodoun, one of the canons of Paul's, a famous and notable preacher in those days, spake most against that parliament. But the cardinal taking him aside, so persuaded the matter with him, that he came no more into the house, willingly absenting himself; thus he giving over his hold, the other yielded, and so was granted the half of all their revenues spiritual for one year, to be paid in five years following."—Stow, *Annales*, p. 519.

† Sir Thomas More was not ignorant of the danger he incurred by refusing his assent to this measure. Meeting with the duke of Norfolk one day, the duke said, "By the mass, Sir Thomas, it is perilous striving with princes; and therefore I would wish you somewhat to incline to the King's pleasure, for, *Indignatio principis mors est*." "Well, my lord," was the reply, "my account is cast, but is this all? Then is there no more difference between your grace and me, but that I shall die to-day and you to-morrow; but what kind of death, it skilleth not. My lord, I say I fear not to die, because I serve a good master."—Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Biog.*, t. ii., p. 176.

and his heirs and successors, should have power to visit and reform all heresies, errors, and other abuses, which in the spiritual jurisdiction ought to be reformed.”

The power given by this enactment was conformable to the spirit of the age, and might be fairly deemed of absolute necessity at a period when the only authority which the world had acknowledged for ages was formally overthrown. No religious mind can contemplate, without terror, the possibility of times arriving in which anarchy should take place of discipline, and the sublime simplicity and unity of the gospel yield to a many-headed monster, worshipped by the giddy multitude, because always ready to assume the countenance which best answers to the passion of the moment. The apprehension of such a state of things would afford an apology for much more being done by pious and anxious minds than the world might suppose expedient. When religion is deemed all-important to the happiness of mankind, it ought not to be a matter of wonder, if the utmost endeavours are made to secure its safety and its purity. The question here considered is, not whether this or that mode of defence is the more legitimate, but whether a defence at all be or be not required. Allow that it is, and we must then look to the general character of the different ages in which the greatest efforts have been made for this purpose, before we decide confidently respecting the moral right or wrong of the means adopted. Henry VIII., in claiming the power of punishing heresy, seems to have sought nothing more than the authority which had hitherto been vested in the Roman Pontiff, and which most men at that time considered should exist somewhere. But while we would offer this suggestion in defence of the monarch's assumption of authority in the present juncture, the difficulty of excusing the mode of putting that authority in action remains as great as ever. Heresy was a word which might be interpreted so as to suit any purpose; and the punishment of heresy might mean any species of infliction, from a small fine up to perpetual imprisonment, or death in the flames. The power of punishing error as if it was crime, was given by the operation of

an error more injurious to society than any of those fostered by the most mistaken sectaries of the day. If ever error could deserve to be punished by the highest of penal inflictions, they ought to have been the first so punished who fostered the monstrous absurdity, that wrong opinion, while mere opinion, should be treated in the same manner as wrong doing.

To secure to the country the inestimable blessings of tranquillity, and the proper operation of regular religious teaching, it was necessary that a power should be lodged somewhere which might temper the fierceness of a new zeal, and prevent one party from becoming the tyrant of the rest. It was possible, also, that in the sudden outbreak of liberty, a proud licentiousness might learn to despise the interests of the humbler portions of society; and, in its desire of indulgence, wantonly cast away the lights, the treasures, the supports of civilization. To meet this, the common sense of the nation might have been considered sufficient; but suppose it had: the power with which a people trust their rulers is the common sense of the nation. But in the case, at present considered, as in every other case of a similar kind, the safe-guard was not looked for as such, but rather as a means of vengeance. As such it was used. The supremacy of the monarch and the Church, or rather of certain orders in the Church, was to be guarded, and not the purity of religion. It cannot escape the observation of any mind tolerably attentive to justice, that a real desire to promote the spiritual improvement of a people would never prompt a government to acts of personal oppression. It might oblige a blasphemer to silence, lest the moral plague under which he was labouring should diffuse itself through the people; but it would scarcely put even the blasphemer to death, if it believed in the omnipotent power of the gospel to convert, and in the superiority of the prayers of Christians to the might of carnal weapons. The use which a government truly Christian would make of a power like that which Henry now assumed, would be to multiply, almost to infinity, the means of general culture. By its authority, here absolute as it should be, it would break



down all the barriers to light and knowledge; it would oblige the ignorant to receive instruction; the prejudiced to admit the softening rays of benignant truth; the corrupt to endure the pain, or the discipline, of seeing themselves left alone by society at large; and the haughty, self-willed sceptic, to stand opposed to, and try his strength, with the best intellects in the land. But the object contemplated by the antient laws against heresy was the safety of the Church, not the salvation of souls. Contrariety of opinion was viewed in the light of sedition, and any attempt to uphold it, as treason. This rendered it an easy matter for the dominant party to silence its enemies, whatever might be the cause of their discontent. A complaint against the clergy, convicted of violating the sacred duties of their calling, was as likely to involve the complainant in ruin, as a denial of some principle essential to the gospel. The worship of images was regarded as not less necessary to salvation than a belief in the merits of Christ; and as it had been established as a rule that the Pope was infallible, so it now seemed to be about to go forth as a rule that the King was infallible also.

Many had already suffered martyrdom in England when the right of the monarch to make inquisition for blood was thus more formally proclaimed. Among the first that experienced the force of Henry's zeal were Bilney and Frith, both of them men of such piety and ability that they might well claim the honour of being foremost in the ranks of Christ's suffering disciples. Bilney's history is generally known.\* He found himself

\* Latimer's account of Bilney's condition is as follows:—"I knew," said the venerable old man, in a sermon before King Edward, "I knew a man myself, Bilney, little Bilney, that blessed martyr of God, who what time he had borne his faggot, and was come again to Cambridge, had such conflicts within himself, beholding this image of death, that his friends were afraid to let him be alone. They were fain to be with him day and night, and comfort him as they could; but no comforts would serve. And as for the comfortable places of Scripture, to bring them unto him, it was as though a man should run him through the heart with a sword." In another sermon he says, "That same Mr. Bilney, which was burnt here in England, for God's Word's sake, was induced and persuaded by his friends to bear a faggot at the time when the cardinal was aloft, and bare the swing. Now when the same Bilney came to Cambridge again, a whole year after, he was in such an anguish and agony, that nothing did him good, neither eating nor drinking, nor any other communication of God's Word; for he thought that ail

exposed, immediately after signing his recantation, to the most terrible agonies of conscience. It is an interesting fact, in the account of his struggles, that he did not allow these sufferings to urge him at once into an open announcement of his repentance, but chose to wait till he could better prove the strength of his heart, and also prepare himself for effecting more than he had hitherto done in the service of the gospel. For this purpose he remained two years at Cambridge, devoting himself to study, and using every means that could be employed for enlightening his mind and filling his soul with heavenly graces. As he knew that an early death awaited him, and that it was only for a season that he could hope to be allowed to go to and fro preaching the Word, his close application had a heroism in it which adds greatly to the interest with which we remember his sufferings. The sorrows of his heart abated as he continued to increase in knowledge and resolution. His course was taken, and soon run. After preaching a short time about Norfolk and Suffolk he was apprehended, and burnt at Norwich by order of the cruel and bigoted Bishop Nixon. The names of Frith, Baynham and others, are too familiar to the English reader to need a particular recital of their sufferings. Their conduct proves how deeply the spirit of true religion was beginning to work in the souls of the Reformers of this country, and how soon the darkness which had so long overspread the Church might be expected to yield to returning light.

It did not appear to those who were most interested in the cause of religious freedom, that much was likely to be gained by the supremacy of the King instead of that of the Pope, when such results attended the change. The clergy in general dreaded that the people would become too free under such an arrangement; and Henry is supposed to have quickened the progress of persecution at this time, in order to stop their discon-

the whole Scriptures were against him, and sounded to his condemnation. So that I many a time communed with him, for I was familiarly acquainted with him; but all things whatsoever any man could allege to his comfort, seemed unto him to make against him."—Fox's Acts and Monuments; Wordsworth, t. ii., p. 36.

tent. Sir Thomas More, on the other hand, doubted the right of the King altogether to interfere in spiritual matters. His refusal to take the oath of supremacy was a sufficient proof of this ; but he refrained from speaking his whole mind on the subject. His tender respect for majesty, and a natural wish, perhaps, not to render his case hopeless, were the mingled motives for this conduct. As soon, however, as he was condemned, he threw off restraint, and expressed himself fully and freely. He now observed, "that he had for seven years bent his mind and study upon this cause ; but as yet he found it no where writ, in any approved doctors of the Church, that a layman, that is, a secular, could be the head of the spiritual or ecclesiastical state." To this the Chancellor replied, "Mr. More, will you be reckoned wiser and of a better conscience than all the bishops, the whole nobility, and the whole kingdom." More answered, "My Lord Chancellor, for one bishop that you have of your opinion, I have an hundred of mine, and that among those that have been saints. And for your one council, which, what it is God knows, I have on my side all the general councils for a thousand years past. And for one kingdom, I have France, and all the other kingdoms of the Christian world." He added, "that their act was not well made, because they swore professedly to do nothing against the Church, which through the whole Christian jurisdiction is one, entire and undivided ; and that they alone had not any authority, without the consent of other Christians, of making laws, or assembling a council against the union and concord of Christendom."\*

More was not the only sufferer in the attempt to

\* Strype's Memorials Ecclesiastical, vol. i., c. xxviii., p. 310. The historian remarks, that many thought More hardly dealt with. No one can doubt that he was so ; but most will feel inclined to agree in the observation, that, "Surely somewhat of the secret hand of Divine justice might be discovered herein. For he had been a very rigorous pursuer after the blood of such as professed the gospel, and was the cause of bringing many of them to the flames ; using rigours and torments likewise upon their bodies, before he brought them to their cruel ends ; and bespattering them after their deaths with false suggestions, as though his passion had not been satisfied with their blood." The instance of Bilney is mentioned, as More had said that Bilney read his recantation at the stake, a statement proved to be false by Archbishop Parker, who was present at the martyrdom.



resist Henry's claim to the supremacy. Fisher lost his life in the same cause; and a remarkable instance of constancy was afforded by the Carthusian monks of the Charter House in London. John Haughton was the prior of the convent at this time; and both he and his brethren had already endured imprisonment for refusing to acknowledge the lawfulness of the King's second marriage. This they had at length been persuaded to do, on the representation that it was not a matter for which they ought to expose themselves to death. The demand made the next year, that they should take the oath of supremacy, plunged them in the deepest sorrow. Their story is an affecting one, for they were evidently pious and honest in their profession; and had the Church of Rome possessed many such men, it would have been difficult to believe that it could become ruined by corruptions, most of which had their origin in a base and utterly worldly disposition.

The prior, on receiving intelligence respecting the oath, called his brethren around him, and having admonished them to beware of the dangers to which the world and Satan were now exposing them, addressed himself particularly to the younger among them. When he saw them bathed in tears, and declaring their readiness to die, he said, "that he would willingly expose himself to God's mercy, and would be an anathema for these his little brethren, and would yield to the King's will, if he might lawfully do it, to preserve them from so many and great dangers. But if they should decree to do otherwise, and demand the consent and oath of the whole house; and if the death of one, that the whole people perish not, will not serve them, the will of God, saith he, be done. And I wish there may be a sacrifice of us all." He then exhorted them to prepare themselves by confession for the trials that were coming; and the next day he preached a sermon on the duty of charity and patience; after which, like men about to die, they embraced each other, in token of peace and brotherly love. On the morrow, the mass of the Holy Ghost was celebrated, in order, it is said, that they might obtain his grace, to be able to accomplish his will and pleasure.

Two priors of other religious houses visited the convent in this season of affliction. They agreed to anticipate the visit of the King's counsellors, by going to Cromwell, now his chief adviser, and intreating him to exempt them from the necessity of taking the oath, or, at least, to lessen the penalties attending a refusal. Instead of being favourably listened to, they were immediately sent to the Tower; and as no persuasions could induce them to comply with the King's demand, they were brought in a few days to trial. Here another difficulty occurred. The jury could not be induced to find them guilty. It was impossible, they said, to call such holy persons malefactors. Cromwell, on hearing this, immediately informed them, "that if they did not straightway find the priors guilty, they should suffer the death of malefactors themselves." As the message did not produce the desired effect, Cromwell went himself, and, after using the most violent threats, succeeded, unhappily, in breaking down this only barrier, for a barrier it seemed to be even in the worst times, against the most wicked injustice. The execution took place at Tyburn, five days after this. When the prior of the Carthusians was ascending the scaffold, an offer of pardon was made him if he would, even at this late hour, take the oath, but he said, "I call the Omnipotent God to witness, and all the good people, and beseech you all to attest the same for me in the terrible day of Judgment, that here being to die, I publicly profess that it is not out of obstinate malice or a mind of rebellion that I do disobey the King, but only for the fear of God, that I offend not the Supreme Majesty, because our holy mother, the Church, hath decreed and appointed otherwise than the King and Parliament hath ordained; and I am here ready to endure this and all other torments that can be suffered, rather than oppose the doctrine of the Church. Pray for me, and pity my brethren, of whom I was the unworthy prior." \*

The other priors were executed at the same time, and another sufferer was added to the number. This was a

\* Strype's Memorials, vol. i., c. xxviii., p. 300; Stow, Annales, p. 570, Lond. 1615.

monk of Sion, named Reinolds, a man, it is said, of great learning and equal piety. At his trial he is reported to have said, "that he had determined to imitate the Lord Jesus, when he was brought before Herod to judgment, and not to answer any thing. But because you urge me," he added, "and that I may satisfy my own conscience, and the consciences of these that are present, I say that our opinion, if it might go by the suffrages of men, would have more plenty of witnesses than yours. For, for some which you (speaking to the Lord Chancellor) produce from the parliament of one kingdom, I have with me the whole Christian world, except those of this kingdom; I do not say all of this kingdom, because the less part is with you. And, granting that the major part of the nation followed not my opinion, it was in external dissembling only, and for fear of losing their dignities or honours, or for hope of obtaining the King's favour." On being charged by the secretary to say who they were that agreed with him, he answered, "that it was all the good men of the kingdom." He then went on to observe, that as to the testimonies of the Fathers, he had on his part all the general councils, all the pastors and doctors of the Church, which were for fifteen hundred years past; particularly Hierom, Ambrose, Augustin, Gregory. And I am sure," he added, "that after his Majesty shall have known the truth of this, he will be offended above measure with some bishops who have given him this counsel." After some other observations, the jury proceeded to their verdict, and he was declared guilty. On hearing which, he quietly said, "*This is the judgment of the world.*" Three other Carthusians were executed soon after, and the Charter-house was put under the direction of two of the secular clergy, who are said to have employed every means in their power to distress the surviving brethren.

Fisher died about a month after these proceedings, and the following month Sir Thomas More. The principal obstacle to Henry's wishes seemed now removed; and his minister, Cromwell, opened every day some new avenue to power, but in such a way that he appeared



thereby to be effecting a proportionable service for the cause of the Reformation. That this was supposed to be the case, appears from a letter addressed to him by one of the most zealous of the evangelical party, whose language, though somewhat too ardent, yet well expresses the feeling of a mind filled with new hopes. "Faithful, trusty and dear beloved minister unto the high power of Almighty God," says the writer, "of that which you have ministration under our Sovereign Lord the King, here in earth the only high and supreme head of this his Church of England, grace, peace and mercy be evermore with you. Laud and thanks be to God the Father Almighty for the true and unfeigned faith that you have in our sweet Saviour Jesu. Paul, the true preacher of Christ, saith, '*Fundamentum aliud nemo potest ponere, præter id quod positum, quod est Jesus Christus.*' Whosoever believeth Jesus Christ to be the only Saviour of the whole world, pacifier of God's wrath, Mediator between God and man, the bearer of sins, and the true Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, hath now set this foundation. Therefore it is to be trusted upon, that where Christ is the foundation, there must needs follow the edifying and building of good works, as testimonies of the true foundation. Also Christ saith, '*Ego sum ostium.*' He entereth in by this door, the which feeleth the truth, and, preaching the same to others, followeth and keepeth it himself. . . . I have many things which I would fain declare to your goodness, but I consider your great and manifold care and business, and mine own impediments, by the custom and trade of men ordained, that let me not only this time, in this mind scribbling to you, but also almost at all times from both study and exercise of the holy Gospel. The true faith and doctrine of the which, I pray God augment to his honour, who ever preserve and keep you. Amen."

Cromwell, it is plain from this letter, had secured the affections of the reformers, and as they were now gradually rising into power, that shrewd statesman might regard them as allies well worthy of attention. The temper of the times, and the wishes of the King, com-

bined to encourage him in many attempts which a few years before it would have been madness for the most powerful of monarchs, the boldest of warriors, the most skilful of politicians, to undertake, even had they consented to unite their influence to carry on the design. Among the several changes contemplated by Henry and Cromwell was that of placing the whole system of monastic polity on a new foundation. The difficulty of such an undertaking would probably have been more apparent to a monarch less intent than Henry on his own purposes. History describes many kings who were proud, tyrannical, occupied with projects of ambition which finally led to the ruin of their subjects, and anxious only about their own glory. But never did a monarch live more completely selfish than Henry VIII. This appeared in the most important of his public proceedings. He threw off the authority of the Pope, that he might satisfy his passions; he defended the Pope, that he might pamper his vanity. He was now about to attempt a mighty revolution in the condition of the religious orders, with the view of replenishing his almost exhausted treasury; and he favoured a reform to the principles of which he stood opposed both by nature and habit, because its progress was now essential to the security of his newly-acquired rights.

Monastic institutions have been viewed, since the dawn of the Reformation, with a stern and indiscriminating prejudice. Prejudice, we fear, has yielded no part of its antient power or domain to the principles of the Reformation. It has, in fact, gained a more legitimate, or better recognized influence among mankind. But, however this may be, monastic institutions suffered as severely from hasty and angry decisions as any that were ever submitted to the judgment of society. This may be accounted for without difficulty. The world has never loved any thing that rebels against its low and selfish principles, and though it have yielded for a time to the predominating influence of peculiar opinions, themselves assuming by degrees its own character and impress, it has gladly, as soon as the prospect of change appeared, emancipated itself from this unwilling subjec-

tion to expediency. Monastic institutions are, in their proper nature, strongly opposed to worldliness. They arose out of a piety, pure and fervent, mistaken, perhaps, in its particular interpretations of some evangelical commands, but worthy of all imitation as to its heavenward tendencies and devotedness. In the early development of its principles, the rich man resigned his wealth; the proudest and most ambitious sacrificed their dignities; the miser became a benefactor to his race; the tyrant allowed his heart to be exalted by the influences of love and humility. The real fruits of divine grace were doubtlessly in many instances produced. Much may be added in appearance, or outwardly, to the genuine principles of holiness without altogether destroying the root, or wholly choking up the channels, whence the branches that bear fruit are supplied with the vital stream. It may be fairly questioned, whether amid the darkness and disorders which so long harassed Christendom, the minds of men, oppressed by the contentions of the world, could have recovered their tranquillity unless they had been able to find a retreat to which its spirit dare not penetrate. In such cases, the bowers of sanctified solitude afforded a cheering hope, that the wounds which had been inflicted by either sin or disappointment, might find a cure; and the experience of those who, in devoting themselves to the exercises of prayer and charity, found how blessed is the peace of holiness, could not but be a valuable lesson to thousands who still served the world. The example might be far less perfect, far less beautiful and redolent of evangelical grace than those which have since been exhibited under the simpler and more direct influence of the gospel; but still it was an instrument in the conversion of souls; a means employed by the Divine Head of the Church in keeping up the number of his people, and resisting the otherwise all-predominating power of outward and sensual tyranny.

But another consideration might be urged with regard to monastic institutions. It may be doubted whether all the good resulted to learning which is commonly supposed to have followed from their establishment.



But it can scarcely be questioned whether those delicate minds which from early youth desired to devote themselves to deep theological meditation, would have been as favourably situated, in the midst of war and tumult, for the cultivation of their peculiar talent, as they were when enabled to escape from the confusion which reigned around into the serene retreats of religion. Though they might not there meet with minds tempered in every way to the same spirit as their own, yet they had escaped from the oppressions of worldliness under its worst forms; they were free from the perpetual insults of inferior minds, knowing no wish but that of giving an indomitable force to the basest and most corrupt of passions; they could look from things temporal to things eternal, because they were not there dazzled by the false glare of symbols and imagery; and they could gain triumphs, at least over themselves, which, meanly as such victories may be thought of by the world, are of inestimable value in the eye of philosophy and religion. The advantages conferred on learning by the solitary student of the monastic cell, are a common theme of praise; but the cultivation of knowledge was rather an accident than a fixed object comprehended in the design of such institutions. Many of the greatest benefits bestowed on erudition by monks were the result of their freedom from care, and the necessity of occupation, which rendered them content to be copyists rather than ambitious to possess the learning which they handed down to posterity. It was in the safety which a weak piety found in monastic retreats that their greatest worth consisted. There the faintest spark was often nursed into a flame; and hearts which would have broken in despair if left to the world, were softened and cherished till they brought forth fruits worthy of repentance. In a state of things which leaves every class of society to pursue its own objects as it best may, and which allows even to individuals of the humblest pretensions the power of obeying every disposition of the heart, the real character of such institutions can scarcely be understood. The struggles through which European civilization had to pass before it arrived

at any degree of maturity, formed an element on which certain minds might career with delight; but it was not from the energy of the bold, or the plans of the subtle, that religion found the means of retaining her control over the consciences of mankind. For this she was indebted, through a long period of confusion, to those who could delight in prayer and meditation; and though we may well lament that they seem to have blended much of superstition with their faith and practice, and that it was but a small proportion of them that exhibited the proper fruits of a healthy piety, it would be to throw away the gold with the dross, if we refused to acknowledge the worth of institutions like the monasteries of the middle ages.

A new order of things had commenced with the dawn of the Reformation. Religion had no longer so much reason to dread the fury of war, or the evils attendant upon continual changes. Private life had begun to possess its securities, and piety, whether adorned only by its simplicity, or rendered majestic by profound learning, might enjoy solitude and safety in every home. One great reason, therefore, for the continuance of monastic institutions was almost set aside; but the habits of thousands, bred up under their shade, gave them still a right to the protection of the community.\*

\* Affecting appeals were made to the feelings of those who were supposed to have sufficient influence to avert the approaching calamity. The persons most to be pitied, it is generally allowed, were the female inmates of the smaller convents. The following is the letter sent by the nuns of Legbourne to the patron of their house. "Right honourable our most singular master and founder, our duty in the humblest wise, presupposed, with daily prayer, as your perpetual and religious bedewomen. Please it your goodness to understand, that whereas Almighty God hath endued you with just title, founder of the priory of Legbourne, to the great comfort of me and all my sisters: we do, and shall always submit ourselves to your most righteous commandment and order, only putting our comfort in your goodness for all causes concerning your poor priory of Legbourne. And whereas we do hear that a great number of abbeyes shall be punished, suppressed, and put down, because of their misliving, and that all abbeyes and priories under the value of 200*l.* be at our most noble prince's pleasure to suppress and put down. Yet if it may please your goodness, we trust in God ye shall hear no complaints against us, neither in our living nor hospitality keeping. In consideration whereof, if it may please your goodness, in our great necessity, to be a mean and suitor for your own poor priory, that it may be preserved and stand, you shall be a more higher founder to us than he that first founded our house. We have none other comfort nor refuge but only unto your goodness, and we wholly submit ourselves unto the pleasure of God, to

In a yet more improved condition of law and justice this would have availed much ; and both the government and the nation would have weighed with the utmost care the difficulties attending any violent or sudden change in respect to institutions which had their roots in the heart of an antient church, and had been hedged round for many centuries by the most sacred associations, or the most pardonable of prejudices.

Henry VIII. had not fully determined on the ruin of the monasteries in his dominions when he issued the order for their general visitation. The commissioners, at the head of whom was Cromwell, received directions which implied nothing more than an earnest desire, on the part of the court, to stop the progress of papal corruption. It was ordered, in the first place : “ That all and singular of the friars of every religious house within the kingdom of England, being personally present in their chapter-house, be assembled together.” Secondly : “ That then, separately and by themselves, each be examined upon such things as shall be thought convenient : that an inquisition be made, and every one be compelled to give an account of his fealty and obedience towards the King, &c. : that all and singular be obliged by oath to notify, preach and persuade all the foresaid matters to the people, whensoever place and occasion shall serve : that they hold for confirmed and ratified, that the foresaid King Henry is head of the Church of England,\* as it is

the pleasure of our prince, and to the pleasure of you our founder ; and howsoever it shall please God that we shall be ordered, we shall continue your faithful and daily bedewomen. As knoweth our Lord, who ever preserve you to your most comfort ”—Ellis : *Original Letters*, vol. ii., p. 74.

\* This year, 1535, says a cotemporary writer, one of the Augustine monks of Canterbury, “ the king sent many doctors, &c., and others, throughout all England, to visit all the houses of St. Benedict’s order, and all the monasteries of every order, hospitals, colleges, and charteries, &c., amongst whom, Dr. Layhton, being a professor in the laws, and the chiefest, did visit our house. Mr. Bartlet being his scribe, and of counsayl with him, the xx day of October. In this visitation all men utterly renounced the name of the Pope, his privileges, and exempt places, &c. The same time, the new house of the prior of the church of St. Saviour’s was set on fire, and burnt, Dr. Layhton the visitor, and Mr. Bartlet the scribe, with others, being present, the xxi day of October, at mydnight.” The issue of this was, that the next year, all the monasteries and religious houses through all England, that were not above the yearly revenue of 300*l.* (all charges deducted), were by act of parliament given to the King’s Majesty, for the amplifying his Crown, and to his successors for ever.—*Strype. Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. i., pt. i., p. 318.



decreed and ratified, as well in the convocation of the clergy, as in Parliament: that they confess the Bishop of Rome, who, in his bulls used the name of Pope, and arrogates to himself the principality of chief bishop, to be esteemed of no greater dignity than any other bishops in their respective dioceses: that none of them, in any sermon privately or publicly preached, call the same Bishop of Rome by the name of Pope, or chief bishop, but by the name of the Bishop of Rome, or of the Roman Church, nor to pray for him as Pope, but as Bishop of Rome, as is aforesaid. That none of them all presume, in any sermon, either public or private, to wrest anything taken out of the Holy Scriptures to another sense; but that every one preach Christ, and all his words and deeds, simply, openly, sincerely, and according to the rule of sacred Scripture, and of the true catholic doctors: that diligent inquisition be made, how many preachers be in every monastery, and who. Then, that all the sermons of each be severely examined, whether they be catholic and orthodox, and worthy of a truly Christian preacher or no; if they shall be found catholic and orthodox, then he shall be admitted a preacher, and his sermons approved; but otherwise they shall be burnt forthwith: let all and singular, as many as be preachers, be admonished, that in their prayers and supplications, made according to the custom, they first commend to God and the prayers of the people, the King as supreme head of the English Church; then Queen Anne, with her issue; and then afterwards the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the other orders of the clergy, as shall seem good. Whatsoever gold or silver, made into plate and graved, and whatsoever other movable goods of any kind, any monastery shall be found to possess and have, they be compelled to produce and show it; and deliver a true and faithful account and bill of all and singular the things. That all and singular the monasteries, and the friars living in them, or in any of them, shall oblige themselves and their successors, by the tie of conscience and an oath, and each by the seal of their convent, given in their chapter-houses, confirm it, that they will faithfully observe all and singular the things aforesaid."

Such were the objects contemplated in the directions given to the visitors of the monasteries. It is easy to perceive that they were capable of being employed to the most inquisitorial and oppressive purposes. The monks who had any discernment soon discovered that they had little more to expect from the shelter of their antient homes. Prudence urged some, timidity others, to declare their readiness to leave their monasteries without delay. A third and more numerous class, were influenced by the desire of change; and thus, at the first view of the case, those who wished to satisfy their consciences on the matter, might be easily led to believe that the King would do nothing but what was just and reasonable. It could not, however, escape the observation of those who had most to dread from the proposed changes, that the visitors proceeded with an exactness in examining the property of the monasteries, which could argue no good under a monarch like Henry. A report, therefore, was speedily circulated that the King intended to appropriate the wealth of the religious houses to the replenishing of his empty coffers. This produced an excitement which not even the most arbitrary government would willingly encounter in its first outbreak. Henry accordingly issued a statement which directly contradicted the popular rumour. He even declared it treasonable to promote such reports, and their authors were rendered subject to condign punishment.

Notwithstanding this apparent unwillingness on the part of the government to incur the responsibility of violent proceedings, the visitation assumed every day a sterner character. Reasons, however, may be found to account for this in the very conduct of the inquiry itself. There can be little doubt, even after allowing much to prejudice, tyranny, and peculation, that abuses existed in the monasteries, of which every law of society imperiously demanded the removal. If this could not be effected without the suppression of the monastic orders themselves, that step was plainly defensible on the simplest principles of public morality. The determination of the question whether this was the only alter-

native, required, perhaps, a different temper to that which now prevailed. But without looking for a more than ordinary degree of caution in the conduct of the visitors, we may allow that the corruptions exhibited by the general system were sufficient to justify the severest measures; and that where a nice discrimination was scarcely to be looked for, nothing less could be expected than the entire dissolution of the monasteries.\*

In the preamble to the act founded on the report laid before the King in parliament, it is stated, "That small

\* Fuller, says "It is confessed by impartial people, that some monasteries of both sexes, being put to the test, appeared very commendable in their behaviour, so that the least aspersion could not justly be cast upon them. I read in one author (Lord Herbert in Henry VIII.) that some societies behaved themselves so well, that their lives were not only exempt from notorious faults, but their spare time bestowed in writing books, painting, carving, engraving; so that their visitors became intercessors for them. Amongst these, the nunnery of Godston, near Oxford, must not be forgotten, which as it hath a good name (being a Bethel, that is God's house, or habitation) well answered thereunto, in the conditions of the people living therein." But there were few such black swans, and these innocent convents being inconsiderable in number, could not preserve the rest from ruin.—*The History of Abbeys*, B. VI., p. 316.

This is further illustrated by some of the letters of the Commissioners. "We repaired to Ashby, where, after one day's tarrying we were fain to depart thence to Catesby nunnery by occasion of sickness, where we have also accomplished the King's commission, according to his high commandment and our poor discretions. Which house of Catesby we found in very perfect order, the prioress a sure, wise, discreet and very religious woman, with nine nuns under her obedience, as religious and devout, and with as good obedience as we have in time past seen, or belike shall see. The said house standeth in such a quarter much to the relief of the King's people, and his Grace's poor subjects there likewise more relieved, as by the report of divers worshipful near thereto adjoining, as of all other, it is to us openly declared. Wherefore if it should please the King's highness to have any remorse, that any such religious house shall stand, we think his Grace cannot appoint any House more mete to show his most gracious charity and pity on than on the said house of Catesby."—*Original Letters*, vol. ii., p. 72., and *Strype*, vol. i., part i., p. 394.

The house of Wolstrobe is thus recommended in a letter from one of the visitors to Cromwell. "The governor thereof is a very good husband for the house, and well beloved of all the inhabitants thereunto adjoining. A right honest man, having right religious persons, being priests of right good conversation, and living religiously, having such qualities of virtue, as we have not found the like in no place. For there is not one religious person there, but that he can and doth use, either embroidering, writing books with very fair hand, making their own garments, carving, painting or grafting. The house, without any slander or ill-fame, and standing in a wet ground, very solitary, keeping such hospitality, that, except singular good provision, it could not be maintained with half so much land more as they may spend. Such a number of the poor inhabitants nigh thereunto daily relieved, that we have not seen the like, having no more lands than they have."—*Strype*, vol. i., part i., p. 393.



religious houses, under the number of twelve persons, had been long and notoriously guilty of vicious and abominable living; and did much consume and waste their churches, lands, and other things belonging to them; and that for above two hundred years, there had been many visitations for reforming these abuses, but with no success; their vicious living increasing daily; so that except small houses were dissolved, and the religious put into greater monasteries, there could no reformation be expected in that matter. Whereupon the King having received a full information of these abuses, both by his visitors, and other credible ways, and considering that there were divers great monasteries in which religion was well kept and observed, which had not the full number in them, that they might and ought to receive, had made a full declaration of the premises in parliament. Whereupon it was enacted, that all houses which might spend yearly two hundred pounds, or within it, should be suppressed, and their revenues converted to better uses, and they compelled to reform their lives.”\*

The objects originally contemplated in the suppression of these lesser monasteries were worthy of the enlightened minds engaged in the work of reformation. It was considered that by the revenues thus taken from the idle and dissolute, new schools might be established, and new dioceses formed, whereby the people at large might be better able to find the means of grace and knowledge. But Henry had other views. While he was not unwilling to entertain the notion of improving the religious state of the nation, by the suppression of the monasteries, he was employed in calculating what portion of the confiscated wealth might be devoted to the carrying on of his wars, or the increase of the splendour of his court. It required but little penetration to see what would be the result, when parties and objects like these were placed in competition. The revenues of the monasteries were speedily dissipated; and, though it could not be said that no memorial was left of the change originally contemplated, religion has ever had

\* Burnet, vol. i., part i., book III., p. 311.

to deplore that the resources which might then have been employed to the great advancement of her interests, and to which she had an inalienable right, were recklessly expended on the vainest and most unsubstantial projects.\*

While these decisive measures were being taken in reference to the inferior monasteries, the heads of the larger houses saw plainly that they would be soon exposed to a similar fate. Stokesley, the Bishop of London, is said to have observed, "These lesser houses were as thorns, soon plucked up, but the great abbots were like putrified old oaks; yet they must needs follow, and so will others do in Christendom, before many years are passed." The sums which the King derived from the confiscations already accomplished, were too large to leave him safe from the temptation to extend the system of spoliation. An ineffectual attempt was made to convince him of the danger of such proceedings. The north of England became the champion of the terrified abbots, and a rebellion, threatening the most serious consequences to the nation, indicated the state of feeling which still prevailed in a large portion of the kingdom. This was fomented from various quarters. The nobility recollected that their ancestors had expended much of their treasures in founding the institutions now about to be sacrificed; the party which remained sincerely attached to the old doctrines of the Roman Church, mourned over the dispersion of the monks, as that of men who had been especially separated from the world to pray for the peace of the departed; and the poor saw themselves deprived of those means of relief which, with all the vices of the monastic orders, seem never to have been refused at the convent door.

\* An office, called the Augmentation Office, was instituted to receive and manage the revenues which thus came into the hands of government. Cromwell and Cranmer were rival claimants upon these funds. The result showed how fatally both erred in not agreeing to employ the confiscated estates, as soon as they fell in, to the strengthening of the Church. A very suspicious sort of remark occurs in a letter from Dr. John London, one of the visitors of religious houses, to Cromwell. "At Caversham," he says, "is a proper lodging, where the chanon lay, with a fair garden and an orchard, mete to be bestowed upon some friend of your lordship's in these parts; for the chanon had nothing to do there but to keep the chapel and receive the offerings."—Ellis, *Original Letters*, vol. ii., p. 80.

Henry saw the necessity of quieting the fears and discontents which had thus arisen. He employed the best writers of the day in urging upon the public mind the equity of that which had been done; and still further to prove his willingness to act justly and temperately, he allowed certain abbeys and nunneries to be restored to their original destination, and to be set apart for the work of charity. But these efforts would have availed little, had he not possessed other means of effecting his designs. The rebellion justified his sending an army into the field to awe the malcontents. This movement was completely successful, and he immediately after found himself in a condition for taking whatever measures he chose, to make himself master of the spoil which continued to tempt his avarice. A new visitation of the remaining monasteries was begun. The points of inquiry were similar to those insisted upon in the previous visitations. But an addition was made to the former articles. The monks and their chiefs were now to be examined as to the part which they had taken in the late commotions. This was a dangerous subject. The suspicions of the government were not confined to those whose conduct afforded a fair plea for accusation, but extended to the monastic orders in general, and thus a stronger reason existed than any which had yet been urged, for the suppression of the larger as well as the smaller houses.

A short time suffices usually for the execution of projects like this. An arbitrary monarch with many learned theologians and lawyers on his side, and engaging in a design which might be supported by several fair and popular reasons, would have little cause to hesitate, when he came to the limits of justice, to pass the boundary, or make his own policy the rule of right. The heads of the more important establishments required stronger arguments to convince them of the necessity of resigning their possessions, than were demanded when the lesser monasteries only came under examination. It appears, therefore, that the surrenders were made slowly and ungraciously during the first year of the new visita-



tion.\* Promises were then held out which induced some of the abbots to further the designs of the King, and in the expectation of gaining pensions which might prove equivalent to the worth of their present uncertain tenures, they resigned, with apparent willingness, the whole of their rights and possessions.

It was not always, however, that the resignation took place because of the bribe offered to the tenants of the convent. In some cases the spirit of reform had begun to operate on the minds of the monks themselves, and they stated, “that they did profoundly consider that the manner and trade of living, which they and others of their pretended religion had for a long time followed, consisted in some dumb ceremonies and other constitutions of the Bishop of Rome, and other foreign potentates, as the abbot of Cisteaux, by which they were blindly led, having no true knowledge of God’s law; procuring exemptions from their ordinary and diocesan, by the power of the Bishop of Rome, and submitting themselves wholly to a foreign power, who never came hither to reform their abuses, which were now found among them. But that now, knowing the most perfect way of living is sufficiently declared by Christ and his Apostles, and that it was most fit for them to be governed by the King, who was their supreme head on earth, they submitted themselves to his mercy, and surrendered up their monastery to him.” By others it was said, “that the abbot and brethren, upon full deliberation, certain knowledge of their own proper motion, for certain just and reasonable causes, specially moving them in their souls and conscience, did freely, and of their own accord, give and grant their houses to the King.” When the resignation could not be procured by promises, or an appeal to conscientious motives, a strict examination into the circumstances of the late rebellion usually furnished the government with the requisite means of effecting its design. Such was the case in respect to the abbeys of Glastonbury and Reading. The heads of those houses, on the breaking out of the commotions in the north, had taken

\* Burnet, vol. i., part i., book III., p. 381; Collec. v. iii., sec. 4.

the injudicious step of sending part of their plate and other valuables to the leaders of the rebellion. It may be doubted, perhaps, whether they did this from the mere desire of securing their property against the emissaries of the King, or with the express design of furnishing the insurgents with the means of carrying on the war. Whichever view be taken of their conduct, it could not fail to expose them to the charge of a treasonable correspondence with the rebels. They were accordingly brought to trial, and soon after executed. This threw the revenues of their abbeys into the hands of the King without further trouble, and their fate operated as an example to all who might be engaged in any scheme for the preservation of their olden rights and dignities.\*

The result of the dissolutions thus effected was contemplated by the friends of the Reformation with extreme anxiety. It was impossible that the Church of Christ should lightly regard, or remain uninfluenced by a change so full of important consequences. The plan as originally exhibited to the nation, promised to all parties the furtherance of the public welfare. Corruptions, it was said, had prevailed, which ought to be viewed as equally insulting to religion, and to the memories of those pious men who had established monasteries as fortresses of learning and devotion. The country at large was aroused by this appeal to its rectitude. Even a large portion of those who remained faithful to the Church of Rome must have felt inclined to subdue their prejudices to the Reformation in general, while thus fixing its regards particularly on institutions, the degradation of which was indisputably injurious to Catholicism itself. It would have required a degree of perverseness and blind iniquity to which the country had not yet descended, to remain insensible to the necessity of a change, when the evidence of the visitors was

\* "My Lord, this shall be to ascertain, that on Thursday, the 14th day of this present month, the abbot of Glastonbury was arraigned, and the next day put to execution, with two other of his monks, for the robbing of Glastonbury church, on the Tor Hill, next unto the town of Glaston; the said abbot's body being divided in four parts, and head stricken off, whereof one quarter standeth at Wells, another at Bath, and at Ilchester and Bridgewater the rest; and his head upon the abbey gate at Glaston."—Ellis's Original Letters, vol. II., p. 99.

made publicly known. The promise of the government, that the confiscated revenues should be employed in the promotion of a purer system of worship and education, engaged the attention of serious and benevolent minds in every class of society. But those who had entered upon the study of Divine truth with an anxious desire to learn the means whereby the hearts of men are subdued to God, and filled with the love of holiness, trusted that they heard in the announcement of the proposed reforms, the proclamation of a new era of light and spiritual freedom. They, the great body of faithful men who had no other wish than that of advancing the cause of Christianity, readily consented to the measures undertaken by Cromwell and his associates. By the dissolution of the convents, two mighty objects were to be attained: the first, the rooting out of superstitions degrading to human nature, and destructive to a sanctifying faith: the second, the supply of abundant revenues, which it was easy to see would be required for the executing of those grand plans of instruction which the nature of Protestantism, at once particularizing and comprehensive, was so likely to originate.

But the mode in which the dissolution was transacted soon taught the few that were well skilled in the policy of courts to expect but little advantage to the Church from the forfeited revenues of the monasteries. By far the larger portion of the wealth thus drawn back from its original destination flowed uninterruptedly into the royal treasury, and was thence profusely dispensed, either to satisfy the creditors of the state, or reward the favoured minions of the palace. From that time it soon became common to see the estates and revenues which had been especially given for the service of religion made a subject of barter, the price at first paid being that of skilful policy or courtiership, and then the gold, which could not have been so well employed on any other marketable commodity. Some scruples, it appears, were entertained in certain quarters, as to the legality of those transfers even which were founded on the consent of the abbots themselves.\* An act of par-

\* Burnet, vol. i., part. i., B. III., p. 383.



liament silenced the doubts of many, but there still remained those who could not be persuaded to believe that when religion, comprehending in its responsibilities the duties of universal charity and instruction, required such ample means for its labour, it could lawfully be deprived of its known and consecrated resources.\*

When the transfer of the lands or revenues belonging to religious houses was first made, it seems to have been understood, that the possession of the wealth necessarily implied the obligation to perform at least some of the duties which originally attached to its enjoyment. If the gate of the monastery no longer opened to receive the way-worn traveller, he would only have, it might be supposed, to direct his steps to the hospitable mansion which, with a more lightsome look, had risen in its neighbourhood. If the poor of the adjacent town or village had lost the alms which the brothers of the convent dis-

\* Sir Henry Spelman has spoken on this subject with equal piety and acuteness. "They have also another comfort," says he, "and that is, that though these things were once spiritual, now they are made temporal by the laws of dissolution, and especially by the stat. of 32 Hen. VIII., c. 7. It is true, that those statutes apply divers law terms unto these things, that properly belong to temporal inheritances, and that the statute of 32 Hen. VIII. hath made them *demandable* by original writs, and hath given certain real actions and other courses for recovering and conveying of them in temporal courts; because laymen could not in former times have sued for things of this nature in any court of the kingdom. But this proveth not the things themselves to be therefore temporal (no more than that an *Englishman* is a *Frenchman* because he saileth in a *French* bottom). For upon the same reason the statute giveth also other actions (for recovering of *tythes* and *offerings* withholden, &c.) in the *courts spiritual*. They, then, that out of the one part of the *statute* will have them temporal, are by the other part enforced to confess them still spiritual, and so to make them, like a centaur, *problema biforma*. It were very hard, in my understanding, to ground a point of so great consequence upon subtlety of words and ambiguous implications, without any express letter of law to that purpose, especially to make the houses and offerings of God *temporal inheritances*. . . . Of the same nature, therefore, that originally they were of, of the same nature do I still hold them to continue; *manente subjecto, manet consecratio, manet dedicatio*. *Time, place* and *persons* do not change them, as I take it, in this case. Nebuchodonozor took the holy vessels of the temple; he carried them to Babylon, he kept them there all his life, and, at last, left them to his son and grandchildren; but all this while the vessels still remained *holy*; yea, though they were come into the hands of those that were not tied to the ceremonies of the law, and at length into the hands of them that had them by a lawful succession from their fathers and grandfathers; yet, as soon as they began to abuse them to profane uses, that very night *Belshazzar* himself died for it, the live *Nebuchodonozor* that took them from the temple was extinct, and the kingdom translated to another nation. Dan. v. 2."—*De Non Temerandis Ecclesiis*. Works, p. 14, Lond. 1723.

tributed with no unkind hand, or if they missed the friendly visitor in their sickness who could administer consolation both to soul and body, they were taught to hope that a new course would be opened to the poorest of the nation, that industry would be better rewarded, and that in the hour of necessity the wealth which had enriched the new proprietors of the Church's lands, would not be stintily employed in succouring the distressed. But this hope was founded on far too favourable an opinion of human nature. The new proprietors soon forgot the origin of their possessions, and the objects for which they had been set apart by the piety of former ages. They lost every trace of those feelings with which even the most worldly spirit could hardly fail to be impressed, when being put in possession of the heritage of God's house; and in a brief space of time vast portions of the revenues, formerly the acknowledged property of religion and charity, were swallowed up in the luxurious establishments of a few favoured families.\*

But the plan for erecting new bishoprics was not neglected, and in the session of parliament held in the spring of 1539, an act was passed which authorized the King to institute by his letters patent the number of sees proposed. In the preamble to this act it is said, "That it was known what slothful and ungodly life had been led by those who were called religious. But that these houses might be converted to better uses, that God's word might be better set forth, children brought up in learning, clerks nourished in the universities, and that old decayed servants might have livings; poor people might have alms-houses to maintain them;

\* In speaking of the responsibilities incurred by those laymen who hold church lands or tithes, the learned author before cited exclaims:—"O! how lamentable, then, is the case of a poor *proprietary* (impropriator), that, dying, thinketh of no other account but of that touching his lay vocation, and then, coming before the judgment-seat of Almighty God, must answer also for this *spiritual function*! First: why he meddled with it, not being called unto it: then why, meddling with it, he did not the duty that belonged unto it, in seeing the Church carefully served, the ministers thereof sufficiently maintained, and the poor of the parish faithfully relieved. This, I say, is the use whereto parsonages were given; and of this use we had notice before we purchased them; and, therefore, not only by the laws of God and the Church, but by the law of the land, and the rules of the Chancery (at this day observed in other cases), we ought only to hold them to this use, and no other."—*De Non Temerandis Ecclesiis*. Works, p. 16.

readers of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, might have good stipends; daily alms might be ministered, and allowance might be made for mending of the highways, and exhibitions for ministers of the Church; for these ends, if the King thought fit to have more bishoprics or cathedral churches erected out of the rents of these houses, full power was given to him to erect and found them and to make rules and statutes for them, and such translation of sees, or divisions of them, as he thought fit." It is well known that the design as originally contemplated, was executed in a very imperfect manner. Had it been fully worked out, the Church would have had ample reason to rejoice in the changes effected by the dissolution of the monasteries; every part of the kingdom would have enjoyed the superintendence of a well-ordered body of clergy, and a sound religious education would have been the birth-right of every native of the land.

It is greatly to be lamented, that at a moment when the interests of the Church stood so greatly in need of support, its most powerful champion had difficulties with which to contend, that gave his enemies the vantage ground, and seemed for a time to render the issue of the struggle uncertain. The King was anxious to secure a uniformity of opinion in the chief council of the nation. He seems to have considered that this could be effected in no way so surely as by getting the parliament to pass an act rendering agreement necessary by law. A committee was therefore formed, consisting of the two Archbishops, several other prelates, and Cromwell. So little progress, however, was made in the committee, that the Duke of Norfolk informed the King that no hope could be entertained of any profitable results from its labours. He presented a paper therefore, containing certain propositions, celebrated afterwards as the "Six Articles." On these he desired to fix the attention of the house, and from their free discussion, it was supposed, arguments might be elicited which would lead to peace and union. The questions under which the plot was hidden that would have speedily thrown back the nation into its former state of darkness, were these, First: Whether Christ's body was



really present in the eucharist, without any transubstantiation? Secondly: Whether the laity ought to be allowed to communicate in both kinds? Thirdly: Whether the vows of chastity were obligatory by the laws of God? Fourthly: Whether private masses were consistent with the divine law? Fifthly: Whether priests might marry without breaking the law of God? Sixthly: Whether there were any law for auricular confession?

Cranmer, and his party, could not fail to discover, that the very propounding of questions like these exposed them to a trial which might end in their ruin. The unsettled state of opinion in England respecting the mystery of the real presence, left the first question unanswered. Cranmer himself, it is known, passed slowly through the several stages of belief on this subject; and at the time when the Six Articles became the subject of discussion, he still adhered to the sentiments of the great mass of the German divines, in contradistinction to those of the theologians of Switzerland. Passing, therefore, over this part of the controversy, he employed his whole strength in combating the principles involved in the other questions. The administration of the communion in both kinds was one of the primary demands of the reformers in all countries. It was defended alike by arguments drawn from Scripture, by the dictates of reason, and the practice of antiquity. These had so far prevailed at the beginning of the Reformation in England, that the giving of the cup to the laity was among the first fruits of the Christian's newly recovered liberty. On this, therefore, Cranmer long and firmly insisted. It was a point so essential to the success of his cause in general, that to have yielded it would have been to break down one of the great barriers against the return of tyranny and superstition. The next question seemed to have been already answered by the dissolution of convents and monasteries. It was reasonably urged, that nothing could be more unjust than the attempt to keep persons subject to vows which were only proper to circumstances that had been violently changed. The retirement and severity of the convent were intended to nourish the mind in the simple exercise of contemplative

devotion. Now that its inhabitants had been sent forth into the world, and were compelled to engage in the ordinary occupations of life, it could not be supposed that they would remain equally indifferent to the common relations of society.

The dissolution of the monasteries furnished a similar argument against the project of restoring private masses. Religious houses, it was stated, had been established, for the most part, in order to afford the means and opportunities necessary for these services. If they were authorized by Scripture, or could be deemed available to the salvation of either the dead or the living, by what rule of equity or religion, asked the reformers, were the institutions dissolved, and the property dissipated, which had been especially consecrated to this use?

A still more painful feeling was experienced when the subject next proposed came under consideration. Cranmer had himself been twice married;\* and owing

\* He married his first wife at the age of twenty-three, and before taking holy orders. His second wife was the niece of Osiander, pastor of Nuremberg, and to whom he was married during his residence in Germany, in 1532. "While the Sacramentarians and Anabaptists," says the able and enlightened author of the life of Cranmer, "were denounced by the royal proclamation, the clergy of the Established Church, who either had followed or might intend to follow the example of the metropolitan by marrying, were also threatened in it with deprivation and imprisonment. From the Archbishop himself several of them had received a dispensation to marry. He knew that in former times the ecclesiastical laws of celibacy had thus been allowed to be neglected, and that the constitutions, which, in some of our provincial councils, had been directed against the clandestine marriages of the clergy, were made for show, but were seldom or never executed. The open restoration of marriage to the clergy appears, indeed, to have been expected before this public menace of Henry had been issued. Cranmer, perhaps, had been thus encouraged to contend, in his suggestions of further reformation to the King, for this liberty. It had been enacted in 1535 that all licenses, dispensations, and faculties, obtained of the Archbishop of Canterbury in matters not repugnant to the Scriptures and the laws of God, should stand in full authority and strength, without any repeal hereafter to be made of them. Hence the grants for the marriages in question. Afterwards Henry, understanding that several, both of the regular and secular clergy, were married without any authority, inserted, in the proclamation against the sectaries, his prohibition of these unions, which, however, though privately contracted, he did not now dissolve. To all, it has been stated, he would have granted throughout his reign the liberty of marrying, if Romish counsels had not prevented him; and to many he had been heard to speak of this intention. But, by the same mischievous guidance, and with a view to exhibit his own skill in controversial theology, he was soon led to enact the Six Articles, the foulest stain, perhaps, upon our statute books, in which the severest determinations are pronounced against the marriages of priests."—Todd, vol. i., p. 267.

to his example, and by the licenses which he had granted, the marriage of the clergy was beginning to be regarded as not contrary to either the law of the land or the law of God. But the same influence which had silenced the arguments of reason and religion in the other cases prevailed in this; and though in regard to auricular confession, the King could not refuse his assent to the convincing reasonings of Cranmer, the Six Articles were framed into a law, and the signal was thereby given for the execution of so many deeds of tyrannous cruelty, that "The bloody Act of Six Articles" soon became the designation of the statute which was thus passed by the express determination of the King, and his bigoted councillors.\* "Very sad and amazing," it is said, "were the resentments of the sober and religious side while this was transacting and hardly yet completed." One of the most learned men of the age observed, that he wondered, "how the King could pretend authority of Scripture for those Articles, there being not any express word of God written for them: unless men use Scripture, said he, for proving these, as the Bishop of Rome quoteth the Scripture to prove his authority. That the determining these Articles to be of faith, without plain authority of Scripture, will, instead of making quietness, create disquietness. That this would reflect upon the King's honour, who had before set forth the gospel within the realm. That if these matters should be declared to be *jure divino*, the Emperor and French King had the same authority in their dominions, as our King in his, and so might determine other things to be *jure divino*, by Scripture misunderstood; and so might the Pope too" †.

Cranmer so far yielded to the storm as to send his wife into Germany, but he made no compromise of opinion, unless we are to believe the loose statement of an

\* Cranmer has left on record, "That these articles were so enforced by the evil counsel of certain papists against the truth and common judgment, both of divines and lawyers, that if the King's majesty himself had not come personally into the parliament-house those laws had never passed."—Strype, Memorials, vol. i., part i., p. 543; and Append. to Mem. of Arch. Cranmer, vol. ii., no. xl., p. 808.

† Strype, p. 543.



anonymous letter against the multifarious testimony which exists to prove his upright and consistent conduct. Immediately after the passing of the Act, several of the most influential members of the House of Peers were sent to visit the Archbishop at Lambeth. "The King's pleasure is," they said, "that we should in his behalf cherish and comfort you, as one that for your travail in the late parliament declared yourself both greatly learned, and also discreet and wise: and, therefore, my lord, be not discouraged for any thing that passed there contrary to your allegations." So far was this compliment from being founded on Cranmer's falling in with the opinions of his opponents, that he replied, "In the first place, my lords, I heartily thank the King's highness for his singular good affection towards me, and you all for your pains. And I hope in God, that hereafter my allegations and authorities shall take place, to the glory of God and commodity of the realm." Cromwell who was present, observed, "You, my lord, were born in an happy hour, I suppose, for do, or say, what you will, the King will always take it well at your hands. And I must needs confess, that in some things I have complained of you to his Majesty, but all in vain; for he will never give credit against you, whatsoever is laid to your charge; but let me, or any other of the council, be complained of, his Grace will most seriously chide, and fall out with us; and, therefore, you are most happy, if you can keep you in this state."\*

\* "Also news here: I assure you, never prince showed himself so wise a man, so well learned, and so catholic, as the King hath done in this parliament. With my pen I cannot express his marvellous goodness, which is come to such effect, that we shall have an act of parliament so spiritual that I think none shall dare say, in the blessed sacrament of the altar doth remain either bread or wine after the consecration; nor that a priest may have a wife; nor that it is necessary to receive our Maker *sub utraque specie*; nor that private masses should not be used, as they have been; nor that it is not necessary to have auricular confession. And notwithstanding my lord of Canterbury, my lord of Ely, my lord of Salisbury, my lords of Worcester, Rochester and St. David's defended the contrary long time, yet finally his highness confounded them all, with God's learning. York, Durham, &c., have showed themselves honest and well learned men. We of the temporality have been all of one opinion, and my lord chancellor, and my lord privy seal, as good as we can devise. My lord of Canterbury and all his bishops have given their opinion, and come in to us, save Salisbury, who yet continueth a lewd fool. Finally, all England have cause to thank God, and most heartily to rejoice of the King's most godly proceedings."—Append. to Mem. of Arch. Cran., vol. ii., no. xxvi., p. 743.

It is probable that the mildness of Cranmer's general temper, his moderation in urging the opinions which it was his most rooted determination to support, conciliated the more virtuous of his opponents, and deceived the rest into the notion that he might, possibly, by flattery, be won over to their side. The present state of affairs was sufficiently gloomy. It was fraught with more than ordinary danger to timid minds. The doctrines of the reformers seemed to have been put on their trial, and found untenable. Henry's temporary favour was calculated to encourage the notion that he had adopted the late severe measures from a discovery of error in the opinions to which he would otherwise have yielded a willing assent. The triumph of the Roman catholic party, therefore, had all the appearance to weak reasoners, of being a victory over a passing and ill-judged effort to change the religion of the country. In the actual position of the two parties, the reformers were less favourably placed than at any other period of the struggle. At an earlier stage, they had the vigorous feelings which prompt to action, because every thing is to be done by bold and earnest daring. At a later season, when called upon to suffer, they had had ample opportunities of proving the truth and holiness of their principles; they had an experience in their hearts of the power of God's grace, and of the inestimable value of the heavenly word, which sufficed to supply the place of whatever they might be obliged to sacrifice of worldly goods, or taught them rejoicingly to despise the shame of the cross, and lay down their lives. The most advanced, at present, had their weak points; and though it may be reasonably hoped that they would have acquitted themselves nobly had they been even now called upon to suffer, it does not seem that they were so fully convinced as to the line of conduct which it would be their duty to pursue, as to render them superior to the complicated difficulties of their position.

So well assured were the leaders of the catholic party of the advantage which they had gained, that they ventured to urge the King to another measure, almost more repugnant than the former to the better sense of the nation. This was the publication of a book on

the ceremonies of the Church, and an order for the restoration of most of the old superstitions. Cranmer bore this new affront to the protestant cause with the same mild and circumspect spirit as that which had carried him through other difficulties. The King directed him to state his objections to the Six Articles in writing; and he thus enjoyed a privilege not only valuable in itself, but highly consolatory at a time when the free expression of opinion, and the full, uninterrupted use of argument were of such importance to every one who might be put upon his trial regarding the hope which was in him.\* Both Latimer and Shaxton, the one bishop of Worcester, and the other bishop of Salisbury, were imprisoned and obliged to resign their dignities in consequence of the late act. Cranmer, by retaining his influence over the King, prevented, it appears, the execution of the design proposed in the book of ceremonies. Great good thereby resulted to the Church; but it is impossible not to admire the noble resolution with which the venerable Latimer, regardless of consequences, declared his simple adherence to the word of God. When one of the bishops asked him why he would not consent to the traditions there set out? he answered, "that he would be ruled by God's book, and rather than he would dissent one jot from it, he would be torn with wild horses." Having made mention of the communion under the name of the Lord's Supper, the bishop exclaimed "Tush! what new term is that?" Another divine, who was present, observed, "That this term was seldom used by the doctors." Latimer immediately rejoined, "That he would rather follow Paul in using his term than them, though they had all the doctors on their side." The bishop then asked, "Why, can we not without the Scriptures order the people? How did they before the Scriptures were written and copied out?" "God knows," said Latimer, "full ill yet, would they have ordered them." †

\* All this long book did our laborious metropolitan put himself to the pains of answering, and thereby hindered the reception of it; for concerning this, I do interpret that passage of Fox, viz., "That the Archbishop confuted eighty-eight articles devised by a convocation, and which were laboured to be received, but were not."—Memorials of Arch. Cran., vol. i., p. 107.

† Strype, Memorials Eccles., vol. i., part i., p. 544.



The fall of Cromwell still further discouraged the protestant party. That celebrated man afforded a melancholy proof of the uncertainty of human prosperity. The favourite minister of the King, he had advanced himself from a low and private station to the first ranks of nobility. He had been only two months created Earl of Essex, when an attainder threw him into the Tower, whence he was led to the scaffold, to illustrate, like his master Wolsey, the miserable condition of those whose fortunes hang on princes' favours.\* This event seemed only the prelude to the ruin of Cranmer, and other heads of the Reformed Church. Plots were commenced, against which the power of God's providence alone could have defended his servants. By his grace they were rendered null, and served in the sequel to prove more fully the fixedness of those purposes of love, whereby the Church of this land was to be established on the rock of the gospel. The examination of the doctrines of Scripture respecting the sacraments, and other subjects of like importance, was undertaken by order of the King; and notwithstanding the present unsettled state of affairs, it was conducted by the several theologians employed in a becoming spirit of moderation. Cranmer gave his opinions with his accustomed caution, and his signature to the summary delivered to the King will probably impress many minds with a painful doubt, whether he did not yield somewhat more than he ought to the arrogant theology of the monarch.

\* "Cromwell was executed on Tower Hill, July 28, 1541. The real cause of his ruin was the part which he took in the marriage of the King with Ann of Cleves. This gave the duke of Norfolk and the other Catholic chiefs ample opportunity of irritating Henry against him. His pious resignation in the hour of death proves, whatever his enemies might say, that he had not neglected to examine himself by the light of heavenly truth. 'I am come hither to die,' said he, 'and not to purge myself, as some think, peradventure that I will. For if I should so do, I were a very wretch and miser. I am, by the law, condemned to die, and thank my Lord God that hath appointed me this death for mine offence. For, since the time that I have had years of discretion, I have lived a sinner, and offended my Lord God, for the which I ask him heartily forgiveness.' In his last prayer he said, 'O Lord Jesu, which art the only health of all men living, and the everlasting life of them which die in thee; I, wretched sinner, do submit myself wholly unto thy most blessed will, and being sure that the thing cannot perish which is committed unto thy mercy, willingly now I leave this frail and wicked flesh, in sure hope that thou wilt in better wise restore it to me again at the last day, in the resurrection of the just.'"—Wordsworth's *Eccles. Biog.*, vol. ii., p. 357; *Strype, Mem. Eccles.*, p. 561.

“This is my opinion and sentence at this present;” he says, “which nevertheless I do not temerarily define, but refer the judgment thereof unto Your Majesty.”

It was in order to the republication of the work, entitled “The necessary Doctrine and Erudition of a Christian Man,” that the conference here alluded to took place. The account which remains of the questions and answers given on this occasion is valuable, as exhibiting the state of opinion at the present period. Thus to the first question, “What a sacrament is by the Scripture?” The answer returned by Cranmer was, “The Scripture sheweth not what a sacrament is, nevertheless, where in the Latin text we have *sacramentum*, there in the Greek we have *mysterium*; and so by the Scripture *sacramentum* may be called *mysterium*, *id est, res occulta sive arcana*.” The Archbishop of York says, “In Scripture we neither find definition nor description of a sacrament.” By the Bishop of London it was answered, “I think that the Scriptures do use this word sacrament in divers places, according to the matter it treateth upon, as also it doth divers other words; yet what a sacrament is by definition, or description of Scripture, I cannot find it explicated openly; likewise, as I cannot find the definition or description of the Trinity, nor yet such like things. What other men can find, being daily and of long season exercised in Scripture, I cannot tell, referring therefore this thing to their better knowledge.”

In a similar manner, the Bishop of Rochester says, “I think that where this word *sacramentum* is found in the Scripture in the Latin translation, there in the Greek is found this word, *mysterium*, that is to say, a mystery, or secret thing.” The Bishop of Carlisle, somewhat more at large, remarks, “What the word sacrament betokeneth, or what is the definition, description, or notification thereof, I have found no such plainly set out by Scripture. But this I find, that it should appear by the same Scripture, that the Latin word *sacramentum*, and the Greek word *mysterium*, be in manner always used for one thing; as much to say as, *absconditum, occul-*

*tatum, vel in occulto.*" Dr. Robertson says, "I do not find that the word sacrament is used with this signification in Scripture, except as it is applied by St. Paul to matrimony, and there the Greek word *mysterium* is used. From Scripture itself, therefore, it cannot be expressly defined." Dr. Cox affirms, "I find not in Scripture the definition of a sacrament, nor what a sacrament is." Dr. Day, in the same manner, "I find no definition in Scripture of this word *sacramentum*, howbeit wheresover it is found in Scripture, the same is in the Greek *mysterium*, which signifieth a secret or hid thing." Dr. Oglethorp, "It does not appear from Scripture what a sacrament is, except inasmuch as it is called a mystery; for various significations of the word are found both in the Scriptures, and in ecclesiastical writers. It cannot, therefore, be defined." Dr. Redmayn says, "I find no definition of this word sacrament in the Scripture; nor likewise of this word *gratia* or *lex*, with innumerable more; and yet what they signify it is known. So the signification of this word sacrament is plain; it is nothing else but a secret, hid thing, or any mystery."

In like manner Dr. Edgeworth remarks, "Like as *angelus, cælum, terra* be spoken of in Scripture, yet none of them defined; so although *sacramentum* be spoken of in Scripture, yet it hath no definition there, but is taken divers ways, and in divers significations." Dr. Symmons merely observes, "This word sacrament in Scripture is not defined." Dr. Tresham, "I say this word sacrament, taken in his common signification, betokeneth a mystery, and hid or a secret thing. But if ye understand it in his proper signification, as we use to apply it only to the seven sacraments, the Scripture sheweth not what a sacrament is. And yet, lest any man might be offended, thinking that because the Scripture sheweth not what a sacrament is, therefore the same is a light thing, or little to be esteemed, here may be remembered, that there are some weighty and godly things, being also of our belief, which the Scripture sheweth not expressly what they are. As, for example, we believe the Son is consubstantial to the



Father: *item*, that the father is unbegotten; yet the Scripture sheweth not what is consubstantial, nor what is unbegotten, neither maketh any mention of the words; likewise it is true, baptism is a sacrament; penance is a sacrament, &c., yet the Scripture sheweth not what a sacrament is." Dr. Leyghon and Dr. Coren express themselves to the same effect; and at the end of the answers there is written in Cranmer's hand, "In the answer next the first question, they do all agree, that it is not evident by Scripture, what a sacrament is but *mysterium*, that is, a secret, or a hid thing."

The second question related to the opinions of ecclesiastical authors on the signification of the word sacrament. It is answered in a manner which shows that the general term *mystery* conveys the meaning attached to it by the early divines as well as by Scripture. The third question was a more important one: "How many sacraments there be by the Scriptures?" Cranmer answers to this, "The Scripture sheweth not how many sacraments there be, but *incarnatio Christi* and *matrimonium* be called in the Scripture *mysteria*, and therefore we may call them by the Scripture *sacramenta*. But one *sacramentum* the Scripture maketh mention of, which is hard to be revealed fully, as would to God it were, and that is, *mysterium iniquitatis*, or *mysterium meretricis magnæ et bestię*." "In the Scripture," says the Archbishop of York, "we find no precise number of sacraments." The bishop of London says, "I find not set forth the express number, with express declaration of this many, and no more; nor yet of these expressly by Scripture which we use especially under the name of sacraments, saving only of matrimony." By the bishop of Rochester it is said, "I think that in the Scripture be innumerable sacraments, for all mysteries, all ceremonies, all the facts of Christ, the whole story of the Jews, and the revelations of the Apocalypse, may be named sacraments." In the same manner the bishop of Carlisle: "The certain number of sacraments or mysteries contained within Scripture cannot be well expressed or assigned; for Scripture containeth more than infallibly may be rehearsed." The answers given

by the other divines were to the same purpose; but that by Dr. Edgeworth was somewhat more full and distinct. "Speaking of sacraments generally," says he, "They be innumerable spoken of in Scripture; but properly to speak of sacraments, there be but seven that may be so called, of which matrimony is expressly called *sacramentum*; Ephes. v.; and, as I think, in the germane and proper signification of a sacrament; so that the indivisible knot of the man and his wife in one body, by the sacrament of matrimony, is the matter of this sacrament; upon which, as on the literal verity, the Apostle foundeth this allegorical saying, *Ego autem dico in Christo et in ecclesia*; for the mystical sense presupposeth a verity in the letter on which that is taken. Six more there be to which the definition doth agree, as manifestly doth appear by the Scriptures, with the exposition of the antient authors." Dr. Leyghon boldly says, "I find not in Scripture any of these seven which we commonly call sacraments, called *sacramentum*, but only *matrimonium*; but I find divers and many other things called sacraments in Scripture." Dr. Coren says, "I cannot tell how many sacraments be by Scripture, for they be above one hundred." In the conclusion it is added, "In the third they do agree, that there is no certain number of sacraments by Scripture, but even as many as there be mysteries, and none of these seven called sacraments, but only matrimony in Scripture."

As in respect to the first question, this also is followed by a corresponding examination of the opinions of the antient divines on the subject. At the end of which part of the inquiry, it is stated that, the members of the conference agreed, "that there is no determinate number of sacraments spoken of in the old authors, but that my lord of York, and Edgeworth, Tresham, Redman, Crayford, and Simmons, say that those seven by old authors may specially obtain the name of *sacraments*. The bishop of St. David's saith that there be but four sacraments in the old doctors most chiefly spoken of, and they be baptism, the sacrament of the altar, matrimony and penance."

In the answers to the fifth question, that is, "Whether the word sacrament be, and ought to be, attributed to the seven only?" we find Cranmer observing, "I know no cause why this word sacrament should be attributed to the seven only; for the old authors never prescribed any certain number of sacraments; nor in all their books I never read these two words joined together, *septem sacramenta*." The archbishop of York and the bishops of London and Rochester replied in a similar manner. In the answer of the bishop of Carlisle we have the sentiments of these prelates given at length. "Certain it is," says the bishop, "that this word sacrament neither is nor ought to be attributed to seven only, for both Scripture and antient authors otherwise applieth it; but yet nothing letteth, but that this word sacrament may most especially and in a certain due pre-eminence be applied to the seven sacraments of most antient name and usage among Christian men. And that the antient authors have so used and applied it affirmeth the said Thomas Walden, convincing Wycliffe and Berengarius, who enforced the contrary, from Cyprian and also Augustine, with other holy doctors, they may so well be gathered." The only difference of any importance in the answers returned is to be found in those of Dr. Edgeworth and some others, who say, in direct contradiction to what has been above stated, that "*sacramentum* in his proper signification is and ought to be attributed to the seven only." Again, it is said by the bishop of Rochester, "I have not read penance called by the name of a sacrament in any of the old authors." Dr. Coren says, in the same manner, "I do not read expressly in old authors penance to be under the name of a sacrament, unless it be in Chrysostom;" whereas Dr. Edgeworth and others state distinctly, "They be all seven found in the authors."

The difference which thus existed in the answers to the fifth question prevailed in those returned to the sixth, which referred to the same subject. In the seventh question, a more direct allusion is made to the doctrine of the sacraments; and it is asked, "What



is found in Scripture of the matter, nature, effect and virtue of such as we call the seven sacraments; so as, although the name be not there, yet whether the thing be in Scripture or no, and in what wise spoken of?" Cranmer's own answer to this important inquiry is as follows: "I find not in Scripture the matter, nature, and effect of all these which we call the seven sacraments, but only of certain of them, as of *baptism*, in which we be regenerated and pardoned of our sin by the blood of Christ: of *eucharistia*, in which we be concorporated unto Christ, and made lively members of his body, nourished and fed to the everlasting life, if we receive it as we ought to do, and else it is to us rather death than life. Of penance also I find in the Scripture, whereby sinners, after baptism, returning wholly unto God, be accepted again upon God's favour and mercy. But the Scripture speaketh not of penance, as we call it, a sacrament, consisting in three parts, contrition, confession, and satisfaction; but the Scripture taketh penance for a pure conversion of a sinner in heart and mind from his sins unto God; making no mention of private confession of all deadly sins to a priest, nor of ecclesiastical satisfaction to be enjoined by him. Of matrimony also I find very much in Scripture; and in this matrimony also is a promise of salvation, if the parents bring up their children in the faith, love, and fear of God. Of the matter, nature, and effect of the other three, that is to say, confirmation, order, and extreme unction, I read nothing in the Scripture as they be taken for sacraments."

It is stated by the archbishop of York, "Of baptism we find in Scripture the institution by the word of Christ; we find also that the matter of baptism is water, the effect and virtue is remission of sins. Of confirmation, we find that the apostles did confirm those that were baptized, by laying their hands upon them, and that the effect then was, the coming of the Holy Ghost into them upon whom the apostles laid their hands, in a visible sign of the gift of divers languages, and therewith of ghostly strength to confess Christ following upon the same. Of the sacrament of

the altar, we find the institution in the gospel; the effect, reconciliation of the sinner, and the union of him to the mystical body of Christ. Of the sacrament of matrimony, we find the institution both in the Old and New Testament; and the effect thereof, remedy against concupiscence and discharge of sin, which otherwise should be in the office of generation. Of the sacrament of order, we find that our Saviour gave to his apostles power to baptize, to bind and to loose sinners, to remit sins and to retain them, to teach and preach his word, and to consecrate his most precious body and blood, which be the highest offices of order; and the effect thereof, grace, we find in Scripture. Of extreme unction, we find in the epistle of the holy apostle St. James, and of the effects of the same."

The answer of the bishop of Carlisle is the most explicit of those rendered by the other prelates. He says, "I think verily, that of the substance, effect and virtue of these seven usual sacraments that are to be taken and esteemed above others, we have plainly and expressly by holy Scripture: of baptism, that whosoever believeth in Christ, and is christened, shall be saved, and except that one be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot come within the kingdom of God. Of matrimony, we have in Scripture, both by name and in effect, in the Old and New Testament, both by Christ and his apostle Paul. Of the sacrament of the altar, I find plainly expressed, both in the holy gospels and other places of Scripture. Of penance, in like manner. Of confirmation, we have in Scripture, that when the Samaritans, by the preaching of Philip, had received the word of God, and were christened, the apostles hearing of the same, sent Peter and John unto them, who when they came thither, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost; then they laid their hands upon them, and so they received the Holy Ghost. 'This,' saith Bede, 'is the office and duty only of bishops;' and, 'This manner and form,' saith Hierom, 'as it is written in the Acts, the Church hath kept, that the bishop should go abroad to call for the grace of the Holy Ghost, and lay his hands upon

them who had been christened by priests and deacons.' Of the sacrament of orders, we have, that Christ made his apostles the teachers of his law and ministers of his sacraments; that they should duly do it, and make and ordain others to do it after them: and so the apostles ordained Matthias to be one of their number. St. Paul made and ordained Timothy and Titus, with others likewise. Of the sacrament of extreme unction, we have manifestly in the Gospel of Mark and Epistle of St. James."

At the conclusion it is stated, "In the seventh they do agree, saving this, that the bishop of St. David says that the nature, effect and virtue of these seven sacraments, only baptism, the sacrament of the altar, matrimony, penance, are contained in the Scripture; the others say that the nature and the virtue of all the seven be contained in the Scripture." In the summary of the answers given to the question, "Whether confirmation, *cum chrismate*, of them that be baptized be found in Scripture," we find it said, "In the eighth they do agree all, except it be the bishop of Carlisle, that *confirmatio cum chrismate* is not found in Scripture, but only *confirmatio cum manuum impositione*; and that also my lord of St. David's denieth to be in Scripture as we call it, a sacrament." My lord of Carlisle saith, that "*chrisma*, as touching the confection and usage thereof, hath a ground to be derived out of Scripture." The others say that "it is but a tradition."

The ninth section of the inquiry bore immediately on a subject of equal interest and importance in the then state of the Church. It asked, "Whether the apostles, lacking a higher power, as in not having a Christian king among them, made bishops by that necessity, or by authority given by God?" To this Cranmer replied, "All Christian princes have committed unto them immediately of God the whole cure of all their subjects, as well concerning the administration of God's word, for the cure of souls, as concerning the ministration of things political and civil governance, and in both these ministrations they must have sundry ministers under them to supply that which is appointed



to their several offices. In the admission of many of these officers be divers comely ceremonies and solemnities used, which be not of necessity, but only for a good order and seemly fashion; for if such offices and ministrations were committed without such solemnity, they were, nevertheless, truly committed; and there is no more promise of God that grace is given in the committing of the ecclesiastical office, than it is in the committing of the civil office. In the Apostles' time, when there was no Christian prince, by whose authority ministers of God's Word might be appointed, nor sins by the sword corrected, there was no remedy then for the correction of vice, or appointing of ministers, but only the consent of Christian multitudes among themselves, by an uniform consent to follow the advice and persuasion of such persons whom God had most endued with the spirit of council and wisdom: and at that time, forasmuch as the Christian people had no sword nor governor among them, they were constrained, of necessity, to take such curates and priests as either they knew themselves to be meet thereunto, or else as were commended unto them by others, that were so replete with the Spirit of God, with such knowledge in the profession of Christ, such wisdom, such conversation and counsel, that they ought even of very conscience to give credit unto them, and to accept such as by them were presented: and so sometimes the Apostles and others, unto whom God had given abundantly his Spirit, sent or appointed ministers of God's Word; sometimes the people did choose such as they thought meet thereunto; and when any were appointed or sent by the Apostles or others, the people of their own voluntary will with thanks did accept them; not for the supremity, empire or dominion that the Apostles had over them to command, as their princes and masters, but as good people ready to obey the advice of good counsellors, and to accept any thing that was necessary for their edification and benefit."

In the summing up of the several opinions on this subject, it is stated that "the Bishop of York, the elect of Westminster, Dr. Edgeworth, says, that 'the Apostles

made priests by their own power, given them by God, and that they had no need of any other power.'” The Bishop of St. David’s observed, that “because they lacked a Christian prince, by that necessity they ordained other bishops.” Dr. Leighton, Coren, Tresham, and Redmayn said that “they ought to have asked license of their Christian governors, if then there had been any.”

The next question was, “Whether bishops or priests were first; and if the priests were first, then the priest made the bishop?” Cranmer answers to this, “The bishops and priests were at one time, and were no two things, but both one office, in the beginning of Christ’s religion.” The Archbishop of York says, “We think that the Apostles were priests before they were bishops; and that the divine power which made them priests made them also bishops: and although their ordination was not by all such course as the Church now useth, yet that they had both visible and invisible sanctification, we may gather of the gospel, where it is written, ‘As the living Father hath sent me, so send I you; and when He had said these things, He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins,’ &c.; and we may well think that then they were made bishops when they had not only a flock, but also shepherds appointed to them to overlook, and a governance committed to them by the Holy Ghost, to oversee both; for the name of a bishop is not properly a name of order, but a name of office, signifying an overseer. And although the inferior shepherds have also cure to oversee their flock, yet for so much as the bishop’s charge is also to oversee the shepherds, the name of overseer is given to the bishops, and not to the other; and as they be in degree higher, so in their consecration we find difference even from the primitive Church.” The Bishop of London replies, “I think the bishops were first, and yet I think it is not of importance whether the priest then made the bishop, or else the bishop the priest; considering, after the sentence of St. Jerome, ‘That in the beginning of the Church, there was none, or, if it were, very small difference between a bishop and a

priest, especially touching the signification.” Dr. Edgeworth says, “Christ, our chief priest and bishop, made his Apostles priests and bishops all at once; and they did likewise make others, some priests, and some bishops; and that the priests in the primitive Church made bishops, I think no inconvenience; as Jerome saith, in an *Epist. ad Evagorium*, ‘Even like as soldiers should choose one among themselves to be their captain, so did priests choose one of themselves to be their bishop, for consideration of his learning, gravity, and good living, &c., and also for to avoid schisms among themselves by them, that some might not draw people one way, and others another way, if they lacked one head among them.’”

A greater difference is seen in the answers to the next inquiry, which bore closely upon the state of the foreign churches, and the character of their ministers at this time. “Has a bishop,” it is said, “authority to make a priest by the Scripture, or no?” and by the second and more important part of the question, “Can any other, but only a bishop, make a priest?” To this Cranmer replies, “A bishop may make a priest by the Scripture, and so may princes and governors also, and that by the authority of God committed to them; and the people also by their election: for, as we read that bishops have done it, so Christian emperors and princes usually have done it, and the people before Christian princes were, commonly did elect their bishops and priests.” In the latter clause of this answer, Cranmer found himself directly opposed to the opinions of most of the other divines engaged in the conference. None disallowed the right of bishops to make priests; though some modified this acknowledgment of the simplest of the privileges belonging to the episcopal office, by a complacent recollection of the powers lately claimed by the King. By these it is said that prelates “cannot use this authority without their Christian prince doth permit them.” The right of any other class of persons to ordain priests is distinctly denied by the Bishop of Rochester; “That any other man may do it besides a bishop, I find no example, either in Scripture, or in doctors.” The Arch-



bishop of York seems to allow the right to priests as well as bishops; "That any other than bishops or priests" he says, "may make a priest, we neither find in Scripture, nor out of Scripture." Dr. Redmayn says, "Whether any other but only a bishop may make a priest, I have not read, but by singular privilege of God; as when Moses, whom divers authors say was not a priest, made Aaron a priest. Truth it is, that the office of a godly prince is to oversee the Church, and the ministers thereof, and to cause them to do their duty; and also to appoint them special charges and offices in the Church, as may be most for the glory of God, and edifying of the people; and thus we read of the good kings in the Old Testament, David, Joas, Ezekias, Josias. But as for making, that is to say, ordaining and consecrating of priests, I think it specially belongeth to the office of a bishop, as far as can be shewed by Scripture, or any example, as I suppose, from the beginning." Dr. Tresham extends the right, in case of necessity; and the same license appears to be allowed by the answer of Dr. Cox; but it is not stated whether this was to be applied to other members of the clergy only, or to princes and the people at large, in particular junctures of the Church.

The great question proposed was, "Whether in the New Testament be required any consecration of a bishop and priest, or only appointing to the office be sufficient?" Cranmer's answer corresponds in spirit to that which he rendered to former inquiries. "In the New Testament," says he, "he that is appointed to be a bishop, or a priest, needeth no consecration, by the Scripture, for election or appointing thereto is sufficient." The Archbishop of York, on the contrary, says, "The Apostles ordained priests by imposition of the hand, with fasting and prayer; and so, following their steps, we must needs think that all the foresaid things be necessarily to be used by their successors; and therefore we do also think that appointment only without visible consecration and invocation for the assistance and power of the Holy Ghost, is neither convenient nor sufficient; for, without the said invocation, it beseemeth

no man to appoint to our Lord ministers, as of his own authority, whereof we have example in the Acts of the Apostles ; where we find, that when they were gathered to choose one in the place of Judas, they appointed two of the disciples, and commended the election to our Lord, that he would choose which of them it pleased him, saying and praying, ‘ Lord, thou knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou dost choose to succeed in the place of Judas.’ And to this purpose in the Acts we read, ‘ The Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas,’ &c. ; and again ‘ Whom the Holy Spirit appointed to rule the Church of God.’ And it appeareth also that in the Old Testament, in the ordering of priests there was both visible and invisible sanctification ; and therefore in the New Testament, where the priesthood is above comparison higher than in the old, we may not think that only appointment sufficeth without sanctification, either visible or invisible.”

Others spoke less confidently on the subject. Among these was the Bishop of London, who said that, though consecration seemed to be required, he left the decision of the matter “ to those of higher judgments.” Dr. Cox said, “ By Scripture there is no consecration of bishops and priests required, but only the appointing to the office of a priest, *cum impositione manuum*.”

The question next asked was, “ Whether (if it fortune a Christian prince, learned, to conquer certain dominions of infidels, having none but temporal learned men with him) it be defended by God’s law, that he and they should preach and teach the word of God there or no ? and also make and constitute priests or no ? ” Cranmer replies to this, “ It is not against God’s law, but contrary, they ought indeed so to do ; and there be histories that witness, that some Christian princes, and other laymen unconsecrated have done the same.” The Archbishop of York says, “ We think that laymen not ordered, not only may, but must preach Christ and his faith to infidels, as they shall see opportunity to do the same, and must endeavour themselves to win the miscreants to the kingdom of God, if that they can ; for as

the wise man saith, ‘God hath given charge to every man of his neighbour;’ and the Scripture of God chargeth every man to do all the good he can to all men. And surely this is the highest alms, to draw men from the devil, the usurper, and bring them to God, the very owner. Wherefore in this case every man and woman may be an evangelist, and of this also we have example. But touching the second part, for cases of necessity; as we neither find Scripture, nor example that will bear, that any man, being himself no priest, may make, that is to say, may give the order of priesthood to another, and authority therewith to minister in the said order, and to use such powers and offices as appertain to priesthood grounded in the gospel; so we find in such case of need, what hath been done in one of the antient writers; although this authority to ordain after form aforementioned be not to laymen expressly prohibited in Scripture, yet such a prohibition is implied, in that there is no such authority given them, either in Scripture, or otherwise; for so much as no man may use this or any other authority which cometh from the Holy Ghost, unless he hath either commission grounded in Scripture, or else authority by tradition, and antient use of Christ’s Church universally received over all.”

An answer was given by the Bishop of London which altered the question, and therefore was no answer at all. He supposed that the prince, when placed in the difficulty spoken of, would be directed by divine inspiration to take the right course, or that a priest might somewhere be found, which supposition contradicted the very terms of the question. The Bishop of Rochester states simply, “*Necessitas non habet legem.*” The Bishop of Carlisle says, “It is to be thought, that Christ may call, as it pleaseth him, inwardly, outwardly, or by both together: so that if no priest might be had, it cannot be thought, but that a Christian prince, with others learned, inwardly moved and called, might most charitably and godlily prosecute that same, their calling, in the most acceptable work, which is to bring people from the devil to God, from infidelity to true faith, by whatsoever means God shall



inspire." Dr. Cox, in the same manner; "It is not against God's law, that the prince and his learned temporal men many teach and preach the word of God, and baptize; and also, the same necessity standing, elect and appoint men to those offices." To the same purpose, Dr. Redmayn; "I think they might, in such case of necessity; for in this case the laymen made the whole Church there; and the authority of preaching and ministering the sacraments is given immediately to the Church; and the Church may appoint ministers as is thought convenient. There be two stories good to be considered for this question, which be written in the tenth book of the History Ecclesiastic; the one of Frumentius, who preached in India, and was after made priest and bishop by Athanasius: and the other story is of the King of the Iberians, of whom Ruffine the writer of the story saith thus, '*Et nondum initiatus sacris fit sue gentis Apostolus.*'" Yet, nevertheless, it is written there, that "an ambassador was sent to Constantine the emperor, that he would send them priests for the further establishment of the faith there." The same examples, with a similar application, are cited by Dr. Edgeworth. Dr. Symmons also says, "I think that in such a necessity, a learned Christian prince, and also temporal men, learned, be bound to preach and minister either sacraments, so that the same ministers be orderly assigned by the high power, and the congregation." In the concluding summary it is stated that, "concerning the first part of the question, that is, 'Whether laymen may preach and teach God's Word,' they do all agree in such a case, 'that not only they may, but they ought to teach.' But in the second part, touching the constituting of priests of laymen, my lord of York, and Dr. Edgeworth doth not agree with the other; they say that laymen in no wise can make priests, or have such authority. The Bishops of Duresme, St. David's, Westminster, Drs. Tresham, Cox, Leighton, Crayford, Symmons, Redmayn, and Robertson, say, 'that laymen in such case have authority to minister the sacraments, and to make priests.' My lords of London, Carlisle and Hereford, and Dr. Coren think, 'that God

in such a case would give the prince authority, call him inwardly, and illuminate him, or some of his, as he did St. Paul.’”

The fourteenth question is on the same subject: it being now asked, “Whether, if all the bishops and priests of a region were dead, the king of that region might make new ones?” By the summary we find that the members of the conference did for the most part agree as before, that “laymen in case of necessity might teach and minister the sacraments.” The Archbishop of York and Dr. Symmons said, “They can make no priests;” on which it is remarked, that Dr. Symmons had said, in his answer to the previous question, “that they might minister all sacraments.” It is added, “Yet my lord of York and Edgeworth do grant that they may christen.” And “The Bishops of London and Rochester, and Dr. Crayford say, that, ‘in such a case, *necessitas non habet legem.*’”

Having discussed these questions respecting the constitution of the priesthood, the conference proceeded in the next place to inquire, “Whether a man be bound by authority of this Scripture, ‘*Whosoever sins ye remit,*’ and such like, to confess his secret, deadly sins to a priest, if he may have him, or no?” Considerable difference of opinion is seen in the answers to this question. Cranmer says distinctly, “A man is not bound by the authority of this Scripture, and such like, to confess his secret deadly sins to a priest, although he may have him.” The Archbishop of York says, “This Scripture is indifferent to secret and open sin; nor is the authority given in the same appointed or limited either to the one or to the other, but is given commonly to both; and therefore, seeing that the sinner is in no other place of Scripture discharged of the confession of his secret sins, we think that this place chargeth him to confess the secret sins as well as the open.”

In the same manner the Bishop of London observes, “I think that, as the sinner is bound by this authority to confess his open sins, so also is he bound to confess his secret sins, because the special end is, to wit,

*absolutionem a peccato cujus fecit se servum*, is all one in both cases ; and that all sins, as touching God, are open, and in nowise secret or hid." The Bishop of Rochester says, " I think that confession of secret deadly sins is necessary for to obtain absolution of them ; but whether every man that hath secretly committed deadly sin is bound by these words to ask absolution of the priest therefore, it is an hard question, and of much controversy amongst learned men, and I am not able to define betwixt them ; but I think it is the surest way to say that a man is bound to confess." The Bishop of Carlisle says more decidedly, " I think that by the mind of most antient authors, and most holy expositors, this text, ' Whose sins,' &c., with other like, serveth well to this intent, that Christian folk should confess their secret deadly sins to a priest, there to be assoiled, without which mean there can be none other like assurance."

Dr. Edgeworth answers more at large, " When there be two ways to obtain remission of sin, and to recover grace, a man is bound by the law of nature to take the surer way, or else he should seem to condemn his own health, which is unnatural. Also, because we be bound to love God above all things, we ought by the same bond to labour for his grace and favour ; so that, because we be bound to love God, and to love ourselves in order to God, we be bound to seek the best and surest remedy to recover grace for ourselves. Contrition is one way ; but because a man cannot be well assured whether his contrition, attrition, or displeasure for his sin, be sufficient to satisfy or content Almighty God, and able or worthy to get his grace, therefore it is necessary to take that way that will not fail, and by which those may be sure, and that is absolution of the priest, which, by Christ's promise, will not deceive thee, so that thou put no stop or bar in the way ; as, if thou do not then actually sin inwardly nor outwardly, but intend to receive that the Church intendeth to give thee by that absolution, having the efficacy of Christ's promise, ' Whosoever sins,' &c. Now the priest can give thee no absolution from that sin that he knoweth



not: therefore thou art bound, for the causes aforesaid, to confess thy sin."

The answers given by some of the other divines are equally strong. "The Scripture," says Dr. Symmons, "as antient doctors expound it, bindeth all men to confess their secret deadly sins;" and Dr. Tresham remarks, "that such confession is a thing most consonant to the law of God, and it is a wise point and a wholesome thing so far to do; and God provoketh and allureth us thereto, in giving the active power to priests to assoil in the words, '*Whosoever sins*,' &c. It is also a safer way for salvation to confess, if we may have a priest. Yet I think that confession is not necessarily deduced of Scripture, nor commanded as a necessary precept of Scripture, and yet it is much consonant to the law of God, as a thing willed, not commanded." Dr. Leighton says, "I think that only such as have not the knowledge of the Scripture, whereby they may quiet their consciences, be bound to confess their secret deadly sins unto a priest. Howbeit no man ought to condemn such auricular confession, for I suppose it to be a tradition apostolical, necessary for the unlearned multitude."

Of the little which now remained for the conference to determine, the first question was, "Whether a bishop or priest may excommunicate, and for what crimes? And whether they only may excommunicate by God's law?" Cranmer answers, "A bishop or a priest, by the Scripture, is neither commanded nor forbidden to excommunicate; but where the laws of any region give him authority to excommunicate, there they ought to use the same in such crimes as the laws have such authority in; and where the laws of the region forbid them, there they have no authority at all; and they that be no priests may also excommunicate if the law allow thereunto."

The Archbishop of York says, "The power to excommunicate, that is, to dissever the sinner from the communion of all Christian people, and so put them out of the unity of the mystical body for the time, *donec resipiscat*, is only given to the Apostles and their suc-

cessors in the gospel; but for what crimes, although in the gospel doth not appear, saving only for disobedience against the commandment of the Church, yet we find example of excommunication used by the Apostles in other cases; as of the fornicator, by Paul; of Hymeneus and Alexander, for their blasphemy, by the same; and yet of other crimes mentioned in the epistle of the said Paul, writing to the Corinthians. And again, of them that were disobedient to his doctrine, 2 Thess. iii. We find also charges given to us by the Apostle St. John, that we shall not commune with them, nor so much as salute him with '*Ave!*' that would not receive his doctrine: by which it may appear that excommunication may be used for many great crimes; and yet the Church at this day doth not use it, but only for manifest disobedience. And this kind of excommunication, whereby man is put out of the Church, and dissevered from the unity of Christ's mystical body, which excommunication toucheth also the soul, no man may use, but they only to whom it is given by Christ." In the same manner the Bishop of London observes, "I think a bishop may excommunicate, taking example of St. Paul with the Corinthians; and also of that he did to Alexander and Hymeneus: and with the lawyers it hath been a thing out of question, that to excommunicate solemnly appertaineth to a bishop, although otherwise both inferior prelates and other officers, yea and priests too, in notorious crimes, after divers men's opinions, may excommunicate semblably, as all others that be appointed governors and rulers over any multitude or spiritual congregation."

Some other members of the conference found it difficult to determine the second part of the question. The Bishop of Rochester says, "It is a hard question, wherein I had rather hear other men speak than say my own sentence; for I find not in Scripture, nor in the old doctors, that any man hath given sentence of excommunication, save only priests; but yet I think that it is not against the law of God that a layman should have authority to do it." Dr. Cox also says, "A bishop or a priest, as a public person appointed to that office, may

excommunicate for all public crimes; and yet it is not against God's law for others than bishops or priests to excommunicate." The Bishop of Carlisle remarks, "I have read in histories also that a prince hath excommunicated open deadly sinners continuing in obstinacy with contempt." And Dr. Day observes, "Others appointed by the Church, though they be no priests, may exercise the power of excommunication." Dr. Redmayn expresses a doubt whether any other may pronounce the sentence of excommunication but a bishop or a priest. Dr. Edgeworth, on the contrary, affirms that "a bishop or a priest only may excommunicate a notorious and grievous sinner or obstinate person from the communion of Christian people, because it pertaineth to the jurisdiction which is given to priests." He adds, however, "There is one manner of excommunication spoken of, 1 Cor. v., which private persons may use, excluding filthy persons, covetous persons, brawlers and quarrellers, out of their company, and neither to eat nor drink with them." Dr. Tresham supposes that the Church may delegate its power in this matter, for he says that not only priests may excommunicate, "but such as the Church authorizes so to do." The same is said by Dr. Leighton; and Dr. Coren more explicitly remarks, "Forasmuch as the keys be given to the whole Church, the whole congregation may excommunicate, which excommunication may be pronounced by such a one as the congregation does appoint, although he be neither bishop nor priest."

The last question proposed was, "Whether unction of the sick with oil, to remit venial sins, as it is now used, be spoken of in the Scripture, or in any antient authors?" Cranmer replies, "Unction of the sick with oil, to remit venial sins, as it is now used, is not spoken of in the Scripture, nor in any antient authors." The Archbishop of York says, "Of unction of the sick with oil, and that sins thereby be remitted, St. James doth teach us; but of the holy prayers, and like ceremonies used in the time of the unction, we find no special mention in Scripture, albeit the said St. James maketh also mention of prayer to be used in the ministry of the same." The



Bishop of London answers, " I think that albeit it appeareth not clearly in Scripture, whether the usage in extreme unction now, be all one with that which was in the beginning of the Church, yet of the unction in time of sickness, and the oil also, with prayers and ceremonies, the same is set forth in the Epistle of St. James, which place commonly is alleged, and so hath been received, to prove the sacrament of extreme unction." Dr. Tresham says, " Unction with oil is grounded in the Scripture, and expressly spoken of; but with this addition, as it is now used, it is not specified in Scripture, for the ceremonies now used in unction, I think, were traditions of man." In the summary, it is stated that " the Bishop of St. David's and Dr. Cox said, that unction of the sick with oil consecrate, as it is now used to remit sin, is not spoken of in Scripture. My lords of York, Duresme, Carlisle, Drs. Coren, Edgeworth, &c. say that it is found in Scripture."\*

Such were the subjects debated in this meeting of the most eminent divines of the day. Their conference could not fail to operate, in an important manner, on the state of opinion. It was seen by all, that difficulties existed in the mere dogmatical assertions of the Romish Church, which a belief in her more fixed and antient tenets ought not to render binding on the conscience. The answers of most of the prelates, and others present, are couched in terms which convey none of the angry feelings so customary in discussions of this nature. Where, a few years before, conviction and uniformity would have been insisted upon at the point of an anathema, inquiry and sober reasoning are allowed to have place. There is, it is true, something startling at first sight in the discrepancy existing between the sentiments of Cranmer and other divines on points relating both to the ordinances and the ministers of the Church. But a closer view of the subject will enable us to see that nothing of a fundamental character was touched in

\* Such was the doubt which prevailed on this subject, that the modest admission spoken of as added by Cranmer to his own signature at the end of the whole, is found attached to every signature in this part of the report.—Burnet's Records, t. iv., B. III., No. xxi. Strype, App. to Mem. of Arch. Cranmer, No. xxvii. p. 744.

the responses of the archbishop and his associates; and that it required but the operation of the same candid and scriptural spirit of inquiry to bring all parties to those conclusions on which the national Church was soon to be happily based. Cranmer's sentiments may be attributed to three sources; that is, either to his increasing acquaintance with Scripture and ecclesiastical history, or to the influence of Henry's opinions and wishes, or to his close connexion with the German and Swiss divines. These, it is probable, all combined in producing that disposition to the rationalism of ecclesiastical systems which, at this time, evidently operated on his feelings.\*

From the year 1536 to the present time, a period of four or five years, the mind of Cranmer had been intently employed in considering the doctrines of the Reformation. He had many to sympathize with him, and they lost no opportunity of carrying their wishes to diffuse light and knowledge into execution. Beginning as they did, while their own opinions on many subjects were confined, it ought not to be a matter of surprise if, in some cases, they yielded more to circumstances than would now be deemed expedient. If we compare their conduct with that of Luther, our admiration of the bold, inflexible spirit of the German reformer, increases in proportion as we see the danger to which their timidity sometimes exposed the cause of truth. But the circumstances in which the two parties stood were not the same. Luther led the way in the reformation of his country's religion. Cranmer accompanied the monarch, venturing on nothing further than persuasion, instead of originating measures or opinions. The articles set forth in 1536 were generally believed to

\* Archdeacon Todd allows that the sentiments of the King had probably a large share in determining Cranmer's opinions on at least one important point. "In not proclaiming now the apostolical institution of Episcopacy, he had been, perhaps, led by the King to aim at an acknowledgment of the sovereign's right to exercise every office in the Church." Henry's notions are seen in a note which he appended to the answer of one of the bishops; he says, "Where is this distinction? Now, since you confess that the apostles did occupy the one part, which you now confess belongeth to princes, how can you prove that ordering is only committed to you bishops?" —Vol. ii., p. 309. Burnet, vol. iii., Rec., No. 70.

have proceeded from the pen of Henry himself;\* and from that very cause they wanted the authority in the eyes of the people which the statements of doctrine delivered by energetic preachers, appealing to the gospel, and venturing all for its sake, have seldom failed to obtain. Such was the failure of this first publication of the articles, that it appeared necessary the following year to employ new measures for the support of the reformed opinions. Henry, therefore, issued the commission, which gave birth to the expository compilation called the Bishop's Book.† This too was submitted to his authoritative revision; and thus the opinions of the theologians who considered his support absolutely necessary to the furtherance of the Reformation, were kept in that state of abeyance which opened the door to many incongruities, scarcely to be removed till the Church should assume its proper and independent authority in matters of belief.

But, notwithstanding these discouraging circumstances, the Reformation had a life in it of which it could not be deprived. This was infused into its principles by the appeals now allowed to Scripture. In the preface to the "Institution," this point is strongly and wisely urged. "We give thanks unto Almighty God," say the compilers, "with all our hearts, that it hath pleased Him to send such a king to reign over us, which so earnestly mindeth to set forth among his subjects the light of Holy Scripture, which alone sheweth men the right path to come to God, to see Him, to know Him, to love Him, and so to serve Him as he most desireth."

The publication of Coverdale's Bible, two years before this, had attracted general notice; but the translation had been subjected to a careful examination by

\* "These articles," says Lord Herbert, "as I gather out of our records, were devised by the King himself, and recommended afterwards to the convocation house by Cromwell, who being lately made Baron and Lord Privy Seal, and then Vicegerent-general of the King's authority in ecclesiastical affairs, gave much subject of discourse."—*Life of Henry VIII.*, p. 466., Lon. 1672. Strype remarks on this, "Notwithstanding what the noble author of the history of Henry VIII. saith, yet we have reason to attribute a great share therein to the Archbishop."—*Memorials*, vol. i. p. 57.

† Its proper title was, "The Godly and Pious Institution of a Christian Man."—Strype, vol. i., p. 74.



Cranmer and other learned men, and a revised version was now printed. In the month of August 1537, the archbishop sent a copy of the precious volume to Cromwell, with an earnest entreaty that he would obtain the King's license for its immediate publication. The application was attended with success; and Cranmer poured forth the thanks of a heart that was evidently overflowing with the most sincere affection for the souls of men and the glory of God. "My very singular and special good lord," says he, in a third letter upon the subject, "in my most hearty wise, I commend me to your lordship. These shall be to give you most hearty thanks, that any heart can think, and that in the name of them which favour God's Word, for your diligence at this time in procuring the King's Highness to set forth the said God's Word and his gospel, by his Grace's authority. For the which act, not only the King's Majesty, but also you, shall have a perpetual laud and memory of all them that be now, or hereafter shall be, God's faithful people, and the favourers of his Word. And this deed you shall hear of at the great day, when all things shall be opened and made manifest. For our Saviour Christ saith, in the said gospel, that whosoever shrinketh from him and his Word, and is abashed to profess and set it forth before men in this world, he will refuse him at that day; and, contrary, whosoever constantly doth profess him and his Word, and studieth to set that forward in this world, Christ will declare the same at the last day before his Father and all his angels, and take upon him the defence of those men."\*

A vast expense had been incurred by the printer, to whose zeal and ability the republication of the Bible was in a great degree owing. The impression of fifteen hundred copies cost, it is stated, five hundred pounds; and it does not appear that any guarantee against loss was given him, either by Cranmer or others interested in the work. A large price had, therefore, to be set on the book, and this, it was immediately seen, would limit its circulation to the more wealthy orders of society. The demand justified the expectation of success;

\* Strype, *Memorials*, vol. i., p. 82.

but the printer soon began to dread that the desire generally expressed by the people for copies of the Bible would greatly injure his mercantile speculation. Some Dutch printers, seeing the disposition of the nation, made preparations for immediately issuing a smaller and cheaper edition. This, it was well known, would satisfy a large proportion of those who otherwise must purchase the more expensive edition; and, at all events, anticipate the profits of any subsequent undertaking on the part of the original speculator. Grafton, therefore, applied for a license from the King, giving him an exclusive right to the printing of the Bible for three years. His arguments were founded not simply on his own claims to attention, but on the important fact that the persons about to print the new edition were not qualified for the task, and would therefore probably send forth a copy of the Scriptures full of errors and defects. His request was accordingly granted; and he soon after proposed to print not only a smaller edition, but another also, which, from the size of the book, should be called "The Bible in the larger Volume."\* To carry these designs into execution, he obtained permission to open an office in Paris, where he could obtain better workmen, and materials at a cheaper rate. But he had reckoned too much on English influence, and on the indulgent temper of the French government. The heads of the Church, and especially the fathers of the Inquisition, speedily turned their attention to the undertaking, and as speedily effected its ruin. An order was obtained which consigned the workmen to a prison, and the copies of the Bible already worked off to the flames. Grafton in vain endeavoured to recover his ground by the influence of the English ambassador. The attempt to carry on such a design in the midst of those who were sworn enemies to the publication of

\* Grafton and Whitechurch, printers at Hamburg. The fictitious name of Matthews was put on the title instead of the names of Tindal and Coverdale, which, it was supposed, might have prejudiced its sale; but it was, in substance, taken from their translation, the correction being intrusted to John Rogers, a learned divine, and who was the first martyr in the reign of Mary.—*Strype, Memorials*, vol. i., p. 83.

God's Word was at length seen to be useless, and Grafton, therefore, yielding to necessity, recommenced the work in England. An edition of the Scriptures was accordingly produced, which proved alike the care of the editors and the willingness of the public to value the boon which was thus bestowed. "The Bible in the larger Volume" appeared in the year 1540, and as an order had been issued, in respect to the former editions, which obliged every parish priest to purchase a copy, and the bishops to place them in different parts of their cathedrals, it might have been supposed that the government, as well as the public, would hail this new edition with sentiments the most favourable to its success. But by this time the Roman Catholic party had acquired that unexpected influence in the mind of Henry which acted so unfavourably on the interests of the Reformation. By the most prejudiced representations that weak, though presumptuous and tyrannical monarch, was persuaded to regard the circulation of the translated Scriptures as likely to foster heresy and licentiousness. Among the other sacrifices, therefore, which he made about this time to the superstitions of an earlier age, was the liberty of reading the Scriptures. Though Bonner himself had been obliged to place six English bibles in St. Paul's cathedral, and every minister of religion had such a short time before been instructed to bring his people to the constant study of the heavenly Word, an order was now sent forth which prohibited its further circulation.

The plea on which this command was justified, arose from the appearance of some short notes and references in the margin of Grafton's bible. These were removed in the second edition, but there were still prefaces, which, it was urged, might lead the people astray. The translation itself also was objected to, and Henry was assured that if he would suppress the present version, the bishops would themselves prepare an edition, and so put the Scriptures into the hands of the people with a better prospect of usefulness. The order further purported, "that no other books should be retained which spoke



against the sacrament of the altar; that no annotations or preambles should be allowed in bibles or new testaments in English; and that the Bible should not be read in church." To this it was added, that "if any spiritual person preach, teach, or maintain any thing contrary to the King's instructions or determinations made or to be made, and should be thereof convict, he should for the first offence recant; for his second, abjure and bear a faggot; and for his third, should be adjudged an heretic, and be burned, and lose all his goods and chattels."\*

This proceeding on the Six Articles, which consigned the venerable Dr. Barnes to martyrdom, and so many others to the flames or a prison, had well prepared the people for any of the consequences which might result from the present uncertain state of affairs. Nor were they without other reasons for looking with fear and trembling at the prospect which offered itself, so far as it depended on the power or dispositions of man. Cranmer's readiness to listen to the dictates of the King in matters of a simply theological character, may be suspected of having favoured Henry's haughty notion of his right to act as a dictator. But it is a melancholy fact, that if Cranmer's mild temper led to this bad consequence, and allowed the monarch to usurp the spiritual rights of the ecclesiastical office, his example also favoured the notion that persecution, even unto death, might be lawfully employed for the conquering of an adverse opinion. The doctrine of the Eucharist had been disputed in every country where the Reformation was known, with feelings, the earnestness of which might become the importance of the subject, but the rancour of which could be justified on no principle of holiness. It was only about two years before the passing of the act of Six Articles that Cranmer sat in judgment

\* Grafton himself was thrown into the Fleet, whence he was not liberated till he had bound himself under a penalty of three hundred pounds not to print any more Bibles till the King and the clergy should agree upon a translation.—Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, vol. i. p. 121. Lord Herbert's *Life of Henry VIII.*, 559. The latter author remarks, "that this statute, though rigorous, was yet a qualification of the Six Articles, which imposed death upon the first offence of this kind; and as the King was now on good terms with the Emperor, he might the better moderate them."

with the King and Cromwell on the pious and enlightened Lambert. By their united power that excellent man was brought to the stake, because he could not be compelled to acknowledge the real presence; and Cranmer did more than consent to an act which, if justifiable, condemns at once every phrase that has ever been uttered in favour of the Reformation, or any principle of religious or spiritual liberty. We cannot understand how Cranmer or his associates could have ventured to complain at the operation of the Six Articles, or have thought their party harshly treated, after such an exhibition on their own sides, so inconsistent with the rights of conscience. To the maxims which they had themselves so unfortunately countenanced must be ascribed much of Henry's bold, unflinching haughtiness. The suppression of the Scriptures would probably never have been attempted, had he not been suffered to place his foot on the reformed Church, as a broader and safer scaffolding for his tyranny than even the Church which he had left. He set out with reformers, and they joined him, aided him in his wicked doings. As the head of the reformed Church, what might he not suppose it lawful to do, when its priests brought to the newly-raised altar a brother for a sacrifice?

## CHAP. VIII.

STATE OF THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND AT THE OPENING  
OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

HAD the Reformation in this country depended so much as it seemed to do on the counsels of man, it would now have lost its most promising signs of success. The heads of the Church were most of them adverse to the only plan of improvement which was likely to succeed. They could not endure that the people should be taught the simple truths of the gospel as the sole remedy for the maladies which superstition had rendered rife throughout the nation. If they countenanced reform at all, it was only to that degree in which it might be effected without really breaking the bonds of spiritual servitude, or giving that strength to the minds and hearts of the people which would have enabled them to abide steadfast in the gospel.\* The few that had sincerely devoted themselves to this great cause of Christ and his Church were continually perplexed by the variety of the means which solicited their attention, and sometimes seemed to demand their almost exclusive confidence. At one time there appeared reason to believe, that the preaching of the gospel, so prosperously begun in different parts of the kingdom, would of itself bring the people to a faith unmixed with error, and to holiness of life. The general dispersion of the Scriptures, the devout affection with which they were received, and the improvement which followed, afforded a similar hope; but the favourable dispositions of the monarch appeared of such

\* "As for the bishops at this time, however zealous they pretended to be in their subjection to the King and his supremacy, and opposition to the Pope's claims in these dominions, yet few of them but cherished his religion, and held fast the corruptions practised in the Church of Rome, and gave little countenance to the reformation of it."—Strype, *Memorials of the Reformation*, vol. i., p. 332.



immense worth; the power which he was supposed to possess in respect to the circulation of the light of knowledge, "thus far thou shalt come, and no further," so dazzled the eyes of some of the ruling men of the party, that for a time they seem to have considered that no sacrifice would be too great if the patronage of this mighty potentate could be thereby effectually secured. Every doctrine was to be submitted to his cognizance before it could be allowed to enter the creed of the Church; not only the Bible, but the Church, too, being for a season subjected to this humiliating servitude. If an opinion reared its head above the rest, because filled with a living spirit that would not suffer its prostration, it was as likely to bring its professor to the scaffold as to the cross. The Scriptures were treated as a court favourite, in fashion one day, in disgrace the next; or as a speculator whose pretensions to usefulness were at first too readily admitted, and who was, therefore, now to be banished till the *experimentum crucis* could be tried upon his art.

But lamentable as would have been the consequences of this state of things, had not the pride of man on the one side, and the frailty of man on the other, been overruled, the grace of God was thereby rendered more conspicuous, and his strength was manifestly perfected in weakness. So truly is this the case, that we err against the plainest historical evidence, when the existence of the Reformed Church of this country is ascribed either to the ordinances of the King, or to the acts of the parliament, or to the wisdom of ecclesiastics. In neither the one nor the other of these powers did the attributes of evangelical consistency exhibit their legitimate character. There was pride; there was pretence; there was a perpetual beginning on the one side; there was devotion on the other; but while the former wanted the grace of sincerity, the other wanted that of firmness, confiding faith, a willingness to suffer at the first moment that it should be discovered, that nothing could be effected without courage and self-sacrifices.

The weakness of the human champion was more than supplied by the mercy of the heavenly leader. While

the timid counsellors of Henry were pursuing a line of policy which would have left every thing to be done by future generations, the blessed Spirit of Truth was manifesting his power on the hearts of men, and instructing them to understand the nature of the gospel, and their inalienable right to its revelations, as the property of Christ's Church universal, whatever the rulers of a particular church might erroneously determine on the subject. The nation was beginning to imbibe the grace of the gospel, and thence arose the hopes of the wise and good that a real reformation might be expected. An evangelized people could not fail to become a reformed church; but a church might be reformed in many of its constitutions and still leave the people where they were, and this would have been the case in England had not the infinite goodness of the Almighty anticipated the prudence and the wisdom of man.

It would be contrary to right reason and common experience to speak of a great work as executed without the use of means; and of those which God has been pleased to employ none can be considered as unnecessary to the harmonious fulfilment of the design. But it is not always the case that those means which first catch the attention are, in reality, the most powerful instruments in the execution of the plan. The English Reformation owed much to the providential arrangement of secular affairs; it was greatly indebted to the position which Cranmer and others of its friends occupied in the councils of the sovereign; and it would savour of presumption to underrate an influence which may so fairly be ascribed to the appointment of God's foreseeing wisdom. But we should do still worse if we set up these means above others which have a nature corresponding more to that of the contemplated design. The diffusion of evangelical knowledge had been attempted long before the government of the country was brought to favour a reformation of the Church. Henry's own proceedings would have been of little worth but for this. He and his ministers came in after the labours of the harvest had been prosperously commenced; and though the protecting smiles of the latter did in no slight degree aid those who

had risen with the dawn, and cheerfully commenced the work in the midst of dangers and discouragements, they entered not upon the labour in the same devoted spirit; they bore but little of the heat and burden of the day; and though in their conspicuous station on the field they attracted reverence, and were for their willing sympathy entitled to a reward, the part they took ought surely not to be regarded in such a light that the praises awarded them might divert attention from the far more important efforts of the less remarkable but more active labourers.

The greatness of the work which had been performed, and which was still being carried on by preachers of the gospel, in different parts of the kingdom, may be best understood by a reference to the holy and spiritual sentiments which they were continually urging upon the people. Tindal began his labours when there was nothing to encourage him on the side of the powerful. His only support was the grace of God; his only comfort an instinctive feeling, which observation fostered, that the time was ripe for efforts like those which the sanctified impulses of his heart were inciting him to undertake. Like Luther, he laid the foundation of his strength in the careful study of Scripture, and his first offering to the Church of Christ was a translation of the New Testament. In his little treatise, entitled "A Pathway into the Holy Scripture," he spoke to his countrymen in a language strange to their ears, but most acceptable to the souls of all who sighed for peace and salvation: "By grace, that is, by favour," says he, "we are plucked out of Adam, the ground of all evil, and grafted into Christ, the root of all goodness. In Christ God loved us, his elect and chosen, before the world began, and reserved us unto the knowledge of his Son, and of his holy gospel, and, when the gospel is preached to us, openeth our hearts and giveth us grace to believe, and putteth the spirit of Christ in us, and we know him as our Father most merciful, and consent to the law, and love it inwardly in our heart, and desire to fulfil it, and sorrow because we cannot; which will, sin we of frailty never so much, is sufficient till more strength be given us; the blood of Christ hath made satisfaction for the rest; the blood of



Christ hath obtained all things for us of God. Christ is our satisfaction, Redeemer, Deliverer, Saviour from vengeance and wrath. Observe and mark in Paul's, Peter's and John's Epistles, and in the Gospel, what Christ is unto us. By faith are we saved only in believing the promises. And though faith be never without love and good works, yet is our saving imputed neither to love nor unto good works, but unto faith only. For love and works are under the law, which requireth perfection, and the ground and fountain of the heart, and damneth all imperfectness : now faith is under the promises which damn not, but give pardon, grace, mercy, favour, and whatsoever is contained in the promises."

Such was the language which this servant of Christ addressed to the victims of that sad system of human pride, avarice and error, which taught that the Church had the power of supplying every deficiency of the real elements of holiness ; which had rendered living faith a nullity, and supplied its place by a blind obedience to powers which, had they been legitimate, must have derived their entire influence from that comprehensive principle of duty. In the same manner had Tindal defined the true character of righteousness, not leaving it to be supposed that it could consist of practices that belong to the outward instead of the inward man, or to circumstances of time and place rather than to the heart and spirit. "Righteousness" says he, "is divers : for blind reason imagineth many manner of righteousnesses. There is the righteousness of works, as I said before, when the heart is away, and it is not felt how the law is spiritual and cannot be fulfilled, but from the bottom of the heart. As the just ministration of all manner of laws, and the observing of them, for a worldly purpose and for our profit, and not of love unto our neighbour, without all other respects and moral virtues, wherein philosophers put their felicity and blessedness, which all are nothing in the sight of God, in respect of the life to come. There is, in like manner, the justifying of ceremonies, which some wage their own selves ; some counterfeit other, saying, in their blind reason, 'Such holy persons did thus and thus, and they were holy men ;

therefore, if I do so likewise, I shall please God ;' but they have none answer of God that that pleaseth. The Jews seek righteousness in their ceremonies, which God gave unto them, not for to justify, but to describe and paint Christ unto them, of which Jews testifieth Paul, saying, now that they have affection to God, but not after knowledge, for they go about to establish their own justice, and are not obedient to the justice or righteousness that cometh of God, which is the forgiveness of sin in Christ's blood unto all that repent and believe. The cause is, verily, that except a man cast away his own imagination and reason, he cannot perceive God, and understand the virtue and power of the blood of Christ. There is a full righteousness, when the law is fulfilled from the ground of the heart. This had neither Peter nor Paul in this life perfectly; unto the uttermost, that they could not be perfecter, but sighed after it. They were so far forth blessed in Christ, that they hungered and thirsted after it. Paul had this thirst; he consented to the law of God, that it ought so to be, but he found another lust in his members, contrary to the lust and desire of his mind, that letted him, and therefore cried out, saying, 'Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ! The righteousness that before God is of value, is to believe the promises of God, after the law hath confounded the conscience."

The right key to the understanding of the Scriptures is, according to this admirable treatise, a pure faith and a holy life. "These things to know, is to have all the Scriptures unlocked and opened before thee, so that if thou wilt go in and read, thou canst not but understand. And in these things to be ignorant, is to have all the Scripture locked up, so that the more thou readest it, the blinder thou art, and the more contrariety thou findest in it, and the more tangled art thou therein, and canst no where through. For if thou add a gloss in one place, in another it will not serve. And, therefore, because we be never taught the profession of our baptism, we remain always unlearned, as well the spirituality, for all their great clergy and high schools, as we

say, as the lay people. And now, because the lay and unlearned people are taught these first principles of our profession, therefore they read the Scripture, and understand and delight therein. And our great pillars of holy Church, which have nailed a veil of false glosses on Moses's face, to corrupt the true understanding of his law, cannot come in; and therefore bark, and say, the Scripture maketh heretics, and it is not possible for them to understand it in English, because they themselves do not in Latin. And of pure malice, that they cannot have their will, they slay their brethren for the faith they have in our Saviour, and therewith utter their bloody, wolfish tyranny, and what they be within, and whose disciples."\*

In his prologue to the Epistle to the Romans, he more fully unfolded the prime mysteries of godliness, leading the minds of his readers to the close contemplation of those truths which render the Word of God what the Apostle has described it, "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,"† and the neglect of which, at any period of the Church, or under any kind of discipline, blunts this heavenly-tempered weapon, and leaves Satan fearless as to any wish which there may be in the Church, or in the hearts of its children, to resist his attacks. The greater part of the corruptions which have been as it were legitimized by the license of a false system of belief, have arisen from defective notions of God's law. Men of corrupt minds but of uneasy consciences are ever anxious to satisfy the one without irritating the other, and by reducing the law to a rule of outward action, they easily, and almost insensibly, pass into the notion, that the outward conformity itself may be generalized and secured by the observance of laws which exist nowhere but in their own fancies. To convince men of this kind of their fatal error, the first step which we ought to take is to prove to them that the law itself is not what they have desired to make it; that in its simplest requirements it demands more than an outward conformity, and that no obedi-

\* Fathers of the English Church, vol. i., pp. 10-33.

† Hebrews, iv., 12.



ence, however strict, however minute and affectionate, to any supposed representative system, can ever be accepted as an atonement for disobeying or neglecting the rule that has its origin with God. The higher nature of the law thus demonstrated, the gospel will present itself to the conscience as the only means of life. It will be viewed as a fountain opened for the cleansing of the soul that has seen its pollutions in the clear mirror of the law; and the value of the grace, of the regenerating influences, which it continually brings into action, will be estimated more and more as the solemn dispensation of justice throws back more forcibly and distinctly the image of innate corruption.

It appears to have been the earnest wish of Tindal to inculcate views which should cut off the retreats in which men had hitherto been accustomed to find shelter. "This word, law," says he, "must not be understood here after the common manner, and to use Paul's term after the manner of men, or after man's ways: that thou wouldst say the law here in this place were nothing but learning which teacheth what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done; as it goeth with man's law, where the law is fulfilled with outward works only, though the heart be never so far off; but God judgeth the ground of the heart, yea, and the thoughts, and the secret movings of the mind, and therefore his law requireth the ground of the heart, and love from the bottom thereof, and is not content with the outward work only, but rebuketh those works most of all which spring not of love from the ground and low bottom of the heart, though they appear outward never so honest and good, as Christ in the gospel rebuketh the Pharisees above all others that were open sinners, and calleth them hypocrites, that is to say, simulacra and painted sepulchres: which Pharisees yet lived no men so pure, as pertaining to the outward deeds and works of the law; yea, and Paul confesseth of himself, that as touching the law, he was such a one as no man could complain on, and notwithstanding was yet a murderer of the Christians; persecuted and tormented them so sore, that he compelled them to

blaspheme Christ, and was altogether merciless, as many which now feign outward good works are.”\*

These important truths are illustrated by the plain testimony of Scripture, and Tindal next showed how impossible it was that the evil should be overcome, except by the Spirit of God. “St. Paul,” he observes, “says that the law is spiritual, as though he would say, if the law were fleshly, and but man’s doctrine, it might be fulfilled, satisfied and stilled with outward deeds. But now is the law ghostly, and no man filleth it, except that all that he doth spring of love from the bottom of the heart. Such a new heart and lusty courage unto the lawward canst thou never come by of thine own strength and enforcement, but by the operations and working of the Spirit. For the Spirit of God only maketh a man spiritual, and like unto the law, so that now henceforth he doth nothing of fear, or for lucre or advantage sake, or of vain glory, but of a free heart and inward lust. The law is spiritual, and will be both loved and fulfilled of a spiritual heart, and therefore of necessity requireth it the Spirit, that maketh a man’s heart free, and giveth him lust and courage unto the lawward. Where such a spirit is not, there remaineth sin, grudging and hatred against the law, which law, nevertheless, is good, righteous and holy. Acquaint thyself, therefore, with the manner of speaking of the Apostle, and let this now stick fast in thy heart, that it is not both one to do the deeds and works of the law, and to fulfil the law. The work of the law is whatsoever a man doeth or can do of his own free will, of his own proper strength and enforcing. Notwithstanding though there be never so great working, yet as long as these remaineth in the heart, sinlust, tediousness, grudging, grief, pain, loathsomeness and compulsion toward the law, so long are all the works unprofitable, lost, yea, and damnable in the sight of God. This meaneth Paul when he saith ‘By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.’† Hereby perceivest thou, that those

\* Fathers of the English Church, vol. i., p. 42.

† Romans, iii., 20.

sophisters are but deceivers which teach that a man may and must prepare himself to grace and to the favour of God with good works, before he has the spirit and true faith of Christ. How can they prepare themselves unto the favour of God, and to that which is good, when they themselves can do no good, or cannot once think a good thought, or consent to do good, the devil possessing their hearts, minds and thoughts captive at his pleasure? Can those works please God, thinkest thou, which are done with grief, pain and tediousness, with an evil will, with a contrary and a grudging mind? O, holy St. Prosperus, how mightily with the Scripture of Paul didst thou confound this heresy, above twelve hundred years ago, or thereupon! To fulfil the law is to do the works thereof, and whatsoever the law commandeth, with love, lust and inward affection and delectation, and to live godly and well, freely, willingly, and without compulsion of the law, even as though there were no law at all. Such lust and free liberty to love the law, cometh only by the working of the Spirit in the heart, as he saith, chap. I, ‘Now is the Spirit none otherwise given than by faith only, in that we believe the promises of God, without wavering, how that God is true, and will fulfil all his good promises towards us for Christ’s blood sake, as it is plain, ‘I am not ashamed,’ saith Paul, ‘of Christ’s glad tidings, for it is the power of God unto salvation to as many as believe,’ for at once and together, even as we believe the glad tidings preached to us, the Holy Ghost entereth into our hearts, and looseth the bonds of the devil, which before possessed our hearts in captivity, and held them that we could have no lust to the will of God in the law; and as the Spirit cometh by faith only, even so faith cometh by hearing the Word of God, when Christ is preached how that he is God’s Son, and man also, dead and risen again for our sakes;’ and, as he saith in chap. III., IV. and X. ‘All our justifying then cometh by faith, and faith and the Spirit come of God, and not of us. When we say faith bringeth the Spirit, it is not to be understood that faith deserveth the Spirit, or



that the Spirit is not present in us before faith. For the Spirit is ever in us, and faith is the gift and working of the Spirit; but through preaching, the Spirit beginneth to work in us; and as by preaching the law, he worketh the fear of God, so by preaching the glad tidings, he worketh faith. And now when we believe and are come under the covenant of God, then are we sure of the Spirit by the promise of God, and the Spirit accompanieth faith inseparably, and we begin to feel his working. And so faith certifieth us of the Spirit, and also bringeth the Spirit with her, unto the working of all other gifts of grace, and to the working out of the rest of our salvation, until we have altogether overcome sin, death, hell and Satan, and are come unto the everlasting life of glory. And for this cause say we faith bringeth the Spirit. Hereof cometh it, that faith only justifieth, maketh righteous, and filleth the law; for it bringeth the Spirit through Christ's deservings; the Spirit bringeth lust, looseth the heart, maketh him free, setteth him at liberty, and giveth him strength to work the deeds of the law with love, even as the law requireth; then at the last out of the same faith, so working in the heart, spring all good works of their own accord.' That meaneth he in the third chapter, for after he had cast away the works of the law, so that he soundeth as though he would break and disannul the law through faith, he answereth to that might be laid against him, saying, 'We destroy not the law through faith,' that is to say, 'we fulfil the law through faith.'"

While this early preacher of the Reformation thus strenuously enforced a system of doctrine, from which superstition and ungodliness must needs shrink abashed, he was sufficiently bold also to draw inferences which struck at the root of most of the arguments advanced by the clergy of Rome, when they urged the claims of their Church to unlimited obedience. By an unfortunate indefiniteness of application, the word, "church," had been gradually deprived of its spiritual signification, and had lost, in the place which it now occupied in the ecclesiastical vocabulary, all the grandeur originally

shed upon it from above. It had been converted into a title of dignity, not for the communion of saints, but for an association of haughty men who had thrown off the yoke of the gospel, and a miserable mass of benighted creatures, who knew not that Christ had said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me;" or that St. Paul had taught, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The simple use of the word, in its lowest sense, describing, that is, any congregation owning the Saviour, and partaking of the sacraments according to his divine institution, was that only in which it could have been honestly employed by the preachers of Rome, as applicable to their Church, even in its best state. As soon as the word, "church," is employed as having a mystical and catholic signification, it ceases to be the title of any particular congregation, or of any set of congregations, or of any institution or establishment, of any thing, indeed, but the body of Christ, the living temple which His Spirit fills. The Churches which have assumed this name, as properly significant of their constitution, and agreeably with apostolic usage, have been careful to keep up the distinction in the meanings of the word so long as they have indulged no sinister or ambitious views. As soon as spirituality decreases, and the views of chief men become secularized, or when the love of authority, or even extreme notions respecting discipline obtain an entrance into the establishment, an effort is generally made to apply the title in its catholic and spiritual sense to the particular and temporal institution. With a veil like this thrown over it, with the golden light of a most beautiful and heavenly mystery shedding a solemn charm through all its courts, the Church claims obedience on new principles; its members are awed and dazzled; sentiment takes the place of knowledge; faith stops short of its proper object, and the poet's precept, that ignorance may be bliss, is put beyond a doubt, by being recognized as a most sound lesson of experience and humility.

Tindal, and the other reformers, saw how necessary it would be to break through the host of errors which

had been fostered, under the plea that the Church, earthly and sensual though it were, was catholic and infallible. To do this, he revived the almost obsolete but primitive representation of the true catholic and spiritual Church. He thereby uttered a warning which reached the understanding of many who would have been deaf to considerations of another kind; and, by making the matter one not of theoretical or learned dispute, but of practical use, he opened a way into the minds of his readers for the best and highest precepts of Christian holiness. "The Church of Christ," says he, "is the multitude of all them that believe in Christ for the remission of sin, and, of a thankfulness for that mercy, love the law of God purely, and without glosses; and, of hate they have to the sin of this world, long for the life to come. This is the Church that cannot err damnably, nor any long time, nor all of them; but as soon as any question ariseth, the truth of God's promise stirreth up one or other to teach them the truth of every thing needful to salvation out of God's Word, and lighteneth the hearts of the other true members to see the same, and to consent thereto. And as all they that have their hearts washed with this inward baptism of the Spirit, are of the Church, and have the keys of the Scripture, yea, and of binding and loosing, and do not err; even so they that sin of purpose, and will not hear when their faults be told them, but seek liberties and privileges to sin unpunished, and gloss out the law of God, and maintain ceremonies, traditions and customs to destroy the faith of Christ; the same are members of Satan, and all their doctrine is poison, error and darkness; yea, though they be popes, bishops, abbots, curates and doctors of divinity; and though they can rehearse all the Scripture without book; and though they be seen in Greek, Hebrew and Latin; yea, and though they so preach Christ, and the passion of Christ, that they make the poor women weep and howl again. For when they come to the point, that they should minister Christ's passion unto the salvation of our souls, there they poison all together, and gloss out the law that should make us feel our salvation in Christ, and drive us in that point



from Christ, and teach us to put our trust in our own works, for the remission and satisfaction of our sins; and, in the apish play of hypocrites, which sell their merits instead of Christ's blood and passion."\*

This was bold language for the times when it was employed; and no stronger proof, perhaps, can be given of the corruption of an age, than that the voice of truth seems to be bold and daring. But Tindal spoke but the language of the gospel; and he spoke it with a deep and fervent love to souls. "So now, dear reader," he continues, "to believe in Christ's blood for the remission of sins, and purchasing of all the good promises that help to the life to come; and to love the law, and to long for the life to come, is the inward baptism of the soul, the baptism that only availeth in the sight of God; the new generation and image of Christ, the only key also to bind and loose sinners; the touchstone to try all doctrines; the lantern and light that scatter and expel the mist and darkness of all hypocrisy, and a preservative against all error and heresy; the mother of all good works; the earnest of everlasting life; and title whereby we challenge our inheritance. And though faith in Christ's blood make the marriage between our soul and Christ, and is properly the marriage garment, yea, and the sign *Thau* (Ezek. ix.), that defendeth us from the smiting and power of the evil angels, and is also the rock whereon Christ's Church is built, and whereon all that is built standeth against all weather of wind and tempests, yet might the profession of faith in Christ's blood, and of love to the law, and longing for the life to come, be called all these things, were malice and froward understanding away, because that where one of them is, there are all three; and where all are not, there are none of them."†

In his answer to Sir Thomas More, Tindal again speaks of the nature of the Church. "There is," says he, "another question, whether the Church may err, which, if ye understand of the Pope and his generation,

\* Prologue to an Exposition upon v. vi. and vii. of St. Matt.—Fathers of English Church, vol. i., p. 199.

† Obedience of a Christian Man. Fathers of the Church, vol. i., p. 201.

it is verily as hard a question, as to ask whether he which hath both his eyes out be blind or no; or whether it be possible for him that hath one leg shorter than another, to halt. But I said that Christ's elect Church is the whole multitude of all repenting sinners that believe in Christ, and put all their trust and confidence in the mercy of God, feeling in their hearts that God, for Christ's sake, loveth them, and will be, or rather is, merciful unto them, and forgiveth them their sins of which they repent; and that he forgiveth them also all the motions unto sin, of which they fear, lest they should thereby be drawn into sin again. And this faith they have without all respect of their own deservings, yea, and for none other cause than that the merciful truth of God the Father, which cannot lie, hath so promised, and so sworn. And this faith and knowledge is everlasting life, and by this we be born anew, and made the sons of God, and obtain forgiveness of sins, and are translated from death to life, and from the wrath of God unto his love and favour. And this faith is the mother of all truth, and bringeth with her the spirit of all truth. Which spirit purgeth us as from all sin, even so from all lies and error, noisome and hurtful. And this faith is the foundation laid of the apostles and prophets whereon Paul saith, 'That we are built, and thereby of the household of God.'\* And this faith is the rock whereon Christ built his congregation. Christ asked the apostles whom they took him for. And Peter answered for them all, saying, 'I say that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, that art come into this world.' That is, we believe that thou art he that was promised unto Abraham, that should come to bless us, and deliver us. Howbeit, Peter yet wist not by what means. But now it is opened throughout all the world, that through the offering of his body and blood, that offering is a satisfaction for the sin of all that repent, and a purchasing of whatsoever they can ask, to keep them in favour, and that they sin no more. And Christ answered, 'Upon this rock I will build my congregation;' that is, upon this faith. And against the

\* Ephes. ii. 20.

rock of this faith can no sin, no hell, no devil, no lies, nor error, prevail ! For whatsoever any man hath committed, if he repent and come to this rock, he is safe. And that this faith is the only way by which the Church of Christ goeth unto God, and unto the inheritance of all his riches, testify all the apostles and prophets, and all the Scriptures, with signs and miracles, and all the blood of martyrs. And whosoever goeth unto God, and unto forgiveness of sins, or salvation, by any other way than this, the same is an heretic, out of the right way, and not of Christ's Church. For this knowledge maketh a man of the Church. And the Church is Christ's body ; and every person of the Church is a member of Christ. Now, it is no member of Christ that hath not Christ's Spirit in it ; as it is no part of me, or member of my body, wherein my soul is not present, and quickeneth it. And then, if a man be none of Christ's, he is not of his Church."\*

Such were the views given of the most important parts of Christian doctrine, at a time when every thing depended upon the preaching of the gospel. With writers like Tindal, it was almost impossible that the nation should remain either blind or indifferent to the evils of a corrupt or imperfect faith. The way of life was set before it. It was roused to the contemplation of heavenly truth in all its majesty ; and language was employed of which every unprejudiced mind could see the force and propriety. The Reformation had been triumphantly begun, when the scriptural theology of Tindal and his companions became acceptable to the people. It was then to be devoutly hoped that God would incline the hearts of the rich and powerful to favour the work ; but its success did not depend on this. He had cleft the rock, and the living water which was thence poured forth would not have been bestowed in vain, though the simplest of the people only had discovered its purity and sweetness. The ruling members of the Church, at this time, were either fiercely intent on silencing the voice of truth, or were indifferent to every thing except the preservation of their revenues.†

\* Fathers of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 257.



Even they from whom the Reformation was subsequently to receive much and valuable assistance, were as yet but imperfectly acquainted with the doctrines for which they afterwards proved themselves willing to suffer persecution. Cranmer himself, we have seen, was so undecided in points of vast importance, that he consented to the martyrdom of faithful servants of Christ, for professing opinions which he was destined to support in the flames. This is not to be laid to his charge as a matter of angry accusation, for what had those who preceded him which they did not receive? What knowledge had they for which they were not indebted to the grace of God, to the illumination of his Spirit? But it illustrates the point which we would see fairly considered. It shows that the English Reformation was not a mere government measure; not the result of royal counsels, the fruit of the wisdom of courts, or a thing so dependent upon circumstances, so weak in itself, that it owed its establishment and growth to the fostering smiles of men in power. A deeper and a nobler foundation was laid for the work in the heart of the nation, than it could ever have obtained by means different to those employed. The religious conversion of a people is not to be effected by any act of power, however devoutly intended. If even the outward change be, in after times, traced only to causes of this kind, the first feeling of discontent will produce innumerable arguments for a retrograde movement, and the great temple of national religion will be hurled into the dust. When the merciful head of the Church, therefore, has been graciously pleased to bestow upon a country the light of a renovated faith, and the recovered blessing is plainly owing to causes of the heavenly nature of which there can be no doubt, it is surely unwise to stop short of the consideration of the prime origin of the good, and allow attention to rest chiefly on instruments less palpably divine. The English Reformation wanted the best principles of such a change, if merely the work of the state, for it would imply that the nation could be made to accept or throw off a religion at a moment's warning, that is, that all religions were alike to it, or that it was

alike indifferent to all. An opponent of the reformed Church, therefore, cannot better aid his cause, than by exalting the influence of the court, and those about it, as the chief authors of the change; while a direct reference to the advancing intelligence and piety of the people, strengthened by the exhortations of sound preachers of the gospel, tends immediately to set aside the objections that are sometimes brought against the Church as the offspring only of a capricious power. A proper view of the facts of the case gives to each party its fair proportion of praise. The grace of God, the blessed determinations of his providence, the present influence of his Spirit, are rightly honoured in the exhibition of their workings, before human power had any thing to do with the matter. In the same way, we give to the measures of the state the due meed of praise; we reverence, as we ought, the rulers and counsellors of the age, when we acknowledge, in their agreement with the wants of the Church, the continued operation of heavenly goodness and wisdom.

It is highly interesting, in this view of the subject, to find how clearly and scripturally the doctrines of the Reformation were published in the early days of its eventful era. The witnesses to the truth were men of profound learning, as well as earnest piety. And it would be well for the Church of Christ, were the broader and more numerous channels of intelligence, which it has since opened, filled with waters as bright and salubrious as those which flowed through its first narrow and obscure courses. The persecution and death of Frith afford a most melancholy proof, either of the weakness or the cruelty of the Church and government, as late as the year 1533. "Frith's long confinement in the Tower," it is said, "without examination, was so heinously taken of the King, that now my lord of Canterbury, with other bishops, as Stokeley, then Bishop of London, and other learned men, were at once appointed to examine Frith." It is well known how the examination was carried on, and what was its issue. But how ought the whole of the procedure to be viewed? Henry, in other cases, was not accustomed to

let his wishes be treated with neglect ; but here we see that, against all law and justice, he could allow an innocent and holy man to lie in the Tower, because the bishops chose to commit him on a vague charge of false opinions. The bishops, it appears, would have left him to perish there, had they acted according to their own will ; but, roused at length by the summons of the King, they were compelled to bring the supposed heretic to judgment. Cranmer, and the rest who favoured the Reformation, cannot be freed from the charge of acting with great pusillanimity in this matter, except on one plea, and it is, that they as yet knew not the truths taught by the early preachers of the gospel ; and, being ignorant of their value, and insensible to their power, still believed in the divine right of the Church to prepare the fires of purgatory on earth. What other apology can be made for Cranmer ? And if it be admitted, it must also be allowed that we have reason to rejoice that the Church of Christ did not depend upon him for the blessings with which it was ready to be enriched.

Frith was apprehended and condemned because of his views respecting the Lord's Supper. The manner in which he pleaded his cause, and the fact that he died because he so pleaded it, furnish an eloquent argument on the side of tolerance, as necessary in every age to the interests of truth. Speaking of the real presence, he says, "First, we must all acknowledge, that it is no article of our faith which can save us, nor which we are bound to believe under the pain of eternal damnation. For if I should believe that his very natural body, both flesh and blood, were naturally in the bread and wine, that should not save me, seeing many believe that, and receive it to their damnations ; for it is not his presence in the bread that can save me, but his presence in my heart, through faith in his blood, which hath washed out my sins, and pacified the Father's wrath towards me. And again, if I do not believe his bodily presence in the bread and wine, that shall not damn me, but the absence out of my heart, through unbelief. Now, if they would here object that, though it be true that the absence out of bread could not damn us ; yet are we bound to believe it, because of



God's Word, which, who believeth not, as much as in him lieth, maketh God a liar; and therefore of an obstinate mind not to believe his Word, may be an occasion of damnation. To this we answer, that we believe God's Word, and acknowledge that it is true: but in this we dissent, whether it be true in the sense that we take it in, or in the sense that ye take it in. And we say again, that though ye have, as it appeareth unto you, the evident words of Christ, and therefore consist in the bark of the letter; yet are we compelled by conferring of the Scriptures together within the letter, to search out the mind of our Saviour which spake the words."

These are the grounds on which every martyr to the opinions of the Roman Church on the doctrine of the real presence might have defended the freedom of conscience. No creed, no act of the primitive councils, had made this doctrine an article of faith. When it was denied, therefore, the offence was not against the catholic faith, but against the authority of a dominant church, and in this we discover the true cause of that implacable rage with which those who disputed the real presence were almost uniformly treated. The human mind, when not under the influence of the Spirit of grace, can far better endure to hear opinions disputed which rest on infallible authority than it can bear to find notions contradicted which depend solely on its own reasonings. And thus it is with churches as soon as they forsake the simplicity of the primitive rule. The notions which have grown up under the shadow of fostering traditions, and which they have adopted as a supplement to the early creed, and stamped with the seal of their own authority, are soon regarded as more properly a symbol of communion than agreement on all the points of primitive and fundamental truth. It is these, therefore, that are to be watched with the most jealous care. To dispute their value, or authority, is to endanger the whole system of which they form a part; and though to doubt the gospel itself might be the greater sin, to doubt the Church is the greater heresy.

The Christian humility of the first reformers is apparent in the tone in which Frith continues his defence:

“We do it not,” says he, “of an obstinate mind; for he that defendeth a cause obstinately, whether it be true or false, is ever to be reprehended. But we do it to satisfy our consciences, which are compelled by other places of Scripture, reasons and doctrines, so to judge of it. And even so ought you to judge of your party, and to defend your sentence, not of obstinacy, but by reason of Scripture, which causes you so to take it. And so ought neither party to despise the other, for each seeketh the glory of God, and the true understanding of the Scriptures.”\*

He then proceeds to show his reasons for asserting that the real presence is no article of faith: “The same faith,” says he, “shall save us which saved the old fathers before Christ’s incarnation: but they were not bound, under pain of damnation, to believe this point: therefore it shall follow, that we are not bound thereto under the pain of damnation. The first part of mine argument is proved by St. Austin, and I dare boldly say almost in an hundred places. For I think there is no proposition which he doth more often inculcate than this; that the same faith saved us which saved our fathers. The second part is so manifest, that it needeth no probation. For how could they believe the thing which was never said nor done? And without the word they could have no faith. Upon the truth of these two parties must the conclusion needs follow. Notwithstanding, they all did eat Christ’s body, and drink his blood spiritually, although they had him not present to their teeth. And by their spiritual eating, which is the faith in his body and blood, were saved as well as we are. For as soon as our forefather Adam had transgressed God’s precept, and was fallen under condemnation, our most merciful Father, of his gracious favour, gave him the promise of health and comfort, whereby as many as believed it were saved from the thralldom of their transgressions. . . . They knew that God was true, and would fulfil his promise unto them, and heartily longed after this seed, and so did both eat his body and drink

\* Treatise on the Body of Christ in the Sacrament. Fathers of the Church, vol. i., p. 442.

his blood, acknowledging, with infinite thanks, that Christ should for their sins take the perfect nature and manhood upon him, and also suffer the death. This promise was given to Adam, and saved as many as did believe, and were thankful to God for his kindness ; and, after it was established, unto our father Abraham, by the Word of God, which said, ‘ In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.’ . . . . . This Abraham did both eat his body and drink his blood, through faith, believing verily that Christ should take our nature, and spring out of his seed, as touching his flesh, and also that he should suffer death to redeem us. . . . . And by that faith was he saved, and yet never did eat his flesh with his teeth, nor never believed that bread should be his body, and wine his blood. And therefore, since he was also saved without that faith, and the same faith shall save us which saved him, I think that we shall also be saved, if we eat him spiritually as he did, although we never believe that the bread is his body. Furthermore, that merciful Moses, which brought the children of Israel out of Egypt into the wilderness, obtained of God, by prayer, both manna from heaven to feed his people, and also water out of the stone to refresh and comfort them. This manna and water were even the same thing to them that the bread and wine are to us. For St. Austin saith, ‘ As many as in that manna understood Christ, did eat that same spiritual meat that we do ; but as many as sought only to fill their bellies of that manna, the fathers of the unfaithful, did eat and are dead. And likewise the same drink, for the stone was Christ.’ Here you may gather of St. Austin, that the manna was unto them as the bread is to us, and likewise, that the water was to them as the wine is to us, which anon shall appear more plainly. St. Austin saith further, ‘ Moses also did eat manna, and Aaron and Phineas did eat of it, and many others did there eat of it, which pleased God, and are not dead. Wherefore ? Because they understood the visible meat spiritually. They were spiritually an hungred ; they tasted it spiritually, that they might spiritually be replenished. They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and all drank the



spiritual drink: even the same spiritual meat, albeit, another bodily meat, for they did eat manna, and we eat another thing; but they did eat the same spiritual meat which we do. And they all did drink the same spiritual drink. They drank one thing, and we another; but that was in the outward appearance, which nevertheless did signify the same thing spiritually. How drank they the same drink? They, saith the apostle, drank of the spiritual stone following them, and that stone was Christ. And thereunto Beda added these words, Behold that the signs are altered, and yet the faith abideth one.’”

It is plain that, to the argument here used, it might be objected, that Christ's actual coming in the flesh, and the consecration of the bread and wine by his own solemn words, had rendered the real partaking of his body and blood possible, whereas, till he had actually taken upon him our humanity, the sacrament could only be administered by signs. But it is not so much with the particular arguments, as with the opinions of these writers that we have to do. Our object is to show how far they had advanced in evangelical knowledge and belief before aid was bestowed from without for the re-establishment of the gospel of Christ. Notwithstanding, however, what a gainsayer might urge in reply to the reasonings of Frith, there is so much of sound and spiritual observation in his writings, that they are in every way a valuable record to the Church, and deserve our affectionate regard as the testament of an elder brother, who with his dying breath bequeathed us the fruits of a laborious and suffering life. His independence as a witness to the truth he thus asserts: “I do neither affirm nor deny any thing because Luther so said, but because the Scriptures of God do so conclude and determine. I take not Luther for such an author, that I think he cannot err, but I think verily that he both may err and doth err in certain points, although not in such as concern salvation and damnation; for in these, blessed be God, all those whom ye call heretics do agree right well. And likewise, I do not allow this thing, because Wickliffe, Æcolampadius, Tindal and Zuinglius so say, but because I see them in that place

more purely expound the Scripture, and that the process of the text doth more favour their sentence. And where you say, that I affirm it to be the bread still, as Luther doth, the same I say again, not because Luther so saith, but because I can prove my words true by Scripture, reason, nature and doctors. Paul calleth it bread, saying, ‘The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ? For we, though we be many, are yet one body and one bread, as many as are partakers of one bread.’ And again he saith, ‘As often as ye eat of this bread, or drink of this cup, you shall shew the Lord’s death until he come.’ Also Luke called it bread in the Acts, saying, ‘They continued in the fellowship of the apostles, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.’ Also Christ called the cup the fruit of the vine, saying, ‘I shall not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine, until I drink it new in the kingdom of my Father.’ Furthermore, nature doth teach you, that both the bread and wine continue in their nature. For the bread mouldeth if it be kept long, yea, and worms breed in it, and the poor mouse will run away with it, and desire no other meat to her dinner, which are arguments evident enough, that there remaineth bread. Also the wine, if it were reserved, would wax sour, as they confess themselves, and therefore they housel the lay people but with one kind only, because the wine cannot continue, nor be reserved, to have ready at hand, when need were. And surely as, if there remained no bread, it could not mould, nor wax full of worms; even so, if there remained no wine, it could not wax sour, and therefore it is but false doctrine that our prelates so long have published. Finally, that there remaineth bread, might be proved by the authority of many doctors, which call it bread and wine, as Christ and his apostles did. And though some sophisters would wrest their sayings and expound them after their fantasy, yet shall I allege them one doctor, which was also Pope of Rome, that maketh so plain with us, that they shall be compelled with shame to hold their tongues. For Pope Gelasius writeth in this manner, ‘Surely the sacraments of the body and

blood of Christ are a godly thing, and therefore through them are we made partakers of the godly nature. And yet doth it not cease to be the substance, or nature of bread and wine, but they continue in the property of their own nature, and surely the image and similitude of the body and blood of Christ are celebrated in the act of the mysteries.' This I am sure was the old doctrine which they cannot avoid. And, therefore, with the Scripture, nature and fathers, I will conclude that there remaineth the substance and nature of bread and wine."

His defence of the pious and enlightened men who had supported this doctrine before him then follows. Who can fail to admire the bold and generous ardour with which he celebrates their worth! Though in the very grasp of the enemy, he did not fear to utter truths as galling as they were just and needful. "And where ye say," he observes, "that it is meetly well known what manner of folk they are, and that God hath in part with his open vengeance declared, I answer, that master Wickliffe was noted, while he was living, to be a man not only of most famous doctrine, but also of a very sincere life and conversation. Nevertheless, to declare your malicious minds and vengeable hearts, as men say, fifteen years after he was buried, you took him up, and burnt him, which fact declared your fury although he felt no fire: but blessed be God, which hath given such tyrants no further power, but over this corruptible body. For the soul ye cannot bind nor burn, but God may bless where you curse, and curse where you bless."

He then speaks of *Æcolampadius* whose adversaries even, he says, "commended his conversation and godly life." Tindal was his faithful and beloved friend, and he pours out his affectionate heart in the most fervent praise of his virtue. "Tindal," says he, "lived, I trust, well content with such a poor apostle's life, as God gave his Son Christ, and his faithful minister in this world, which is not sure of so many mites, as ye be yearly of pounds, although I am sure that, for his learning and judgment in Scripture, he were more worthy to be promoted than all the bishops in England."

Dr. Barnes was among the first who preached the



gospel at Cambridge; and though his timid nature made him shrink, in the early part of his career, from the terrors of martyrdom, he spent the rest of his life in publishing the truths which he had learnt in the careful study of Scripture. He fell, at last, a victim rather to the base injustice of the times, than an example of heroism. His views were sound and clear, and the absence of that glowing spirit which shed so much brightness on the sufferings of other martyrs, though it may lessen the interest of his history, gives additional value to his statement of doctrine. Justification by faith was the point which he saw it most necessary to urge, both in his own defence and for the glory of the gospel. "If we will truly confess Christ," says he, "then must we grant with our hearts that Christ is all our justice, all our redemption, all our wisdom, all our holiness, all alone the purchase of grace, alone the peace-maker between God and man. Briefly, all goodness that we have, that it is of him, by him, and for his sake only. And that we have need of nothing towards our salvation but of him only, and we desire no other salvation, nor any other satisfaction, nor any help of any other creature, either heavenly or earthly, but of him only; for, as St. Peter saith, 'There is no other name given unto men wherein they must be saved.' And also St. Paul saith, 'By him are all that believe justified from all things.' Moreover, St. John witnesseth the same in these words, 'He it is that hath obtained grace for our sins.' And in another place, 'He sent his Son to make agreement for our sins.' Now, my lords, here have you Christ and his very nature, full and whole. And he that denieth any thing, or any part of these things, or taketh any part of them, and applieth them, or giveth the glory of them to any other person than Christ only, the same man robbeth Christ of his honour, and denieth Christ, and is very antichrist. Wherefore, my lords, first what say you to this, and unto the properties of Christ? If you grant them, then are we at a point. For they prove that faith in Jesus Christ only justifieth afore God. Secondly, if you deny it, as I am sure you will, for you had rather deny your creed than grant it, how can you then avoid,

but that you be the very antichrist of whom St. John speaketh? For now have we tried your spirits, that they be not of God, for you deny Christ, that is, you deny the very nature and property of Christ. You grant the name, but you deny the virtue; you grant that he descended from heaven, but you deny the profit thereof. For he descended for our health, this deny you; and yet it is your creed. You grant that he was born, but you deny the purpose; you grant that he was risen from death, but you deny the profit thereof, for he rose to justify us; you grant that he is a saviour, but you deny that he is alone the Saviour. I pray you, wherefore was he born? To justify us in part, to redeem us in part, to do satisfaction for part of our sins? So that we must set a pair of old shoes, a lump of bread and cheese, or a lousy grey coat to make satisfaction for the other part? Say what you will, if you give not all, and fully, and alone, to one Christ, then deny you Christ and the Holy Ghost.”\*

After supporting his views by reference to the numerous passages of Scripture which bear on the subject, he says, “But peradventure you will say, that works with faith do justify. Nevertheless, of meekness, and lowliness, and avoiding of all boast of goodness, you will give all the glory to faith, as unto the principal thing, and without the which no works can help. Notwithstanding works are good, and help to justification, though of meekness you will not know it! Is not this damnable hypocrisy? yea, and that with God, which were intolerable, if it were with men. But how can you prove by Scripture that works are worthy of any glory of justification? Is not this open lying on faith, to give all to him, and yet, as you say, he is not worthy of all? for works are worthy of part. If faith be not worthy alone, confess it openly, and give works his praise, and faith her praise, and say not one thing with your mouth and think another in your heart. For God searcheth the privacies of hearts. Who hath required of you such a meekness? But I pray you, how can works help to justification, less or more, when they

\* Treatise on Justification. Fathers of the Church, vol. i., p. 554.

be neither done, nor yet thought of? Who is justified, but a wicked man, which thinketh nothing of good works? But these meek lies deserve no answer."

Having quoted St. Ambrose in support of his argument, he says, "Are not these words plain? God hath decreed that he shall require nothing to justification but faith; and he is blessed to whom God imputeth justification, without all manner of works, without all manner of observations. Also their sins are covered, and no manner of works of penance read of them, but alone to believe. Here have you '*sola fides*' and '*tantum fides*,' and here can you not say, that St. Ambrose speaketh alone of works of the law, but of all manner of works, of all manner of observations, yea, and also of penance. Peradventure it will be said, as a great doctor said once to me, that St. Ambrose did understand it of young children that were newly baptized; then their faith should save alone, without works. How think you? Is not this a likely answer for a great doctor of divinity? for a great Dunsman? for so great a preacher? Are not St. Paul and St. Ambrose well avoided? and clerkly? But I made him this answer: That this epistle was written of St. Paul to the Romans, which were men and not children; and also the words of Scripture speak of the man, and not of the child. And St. Ambrose saith, 'Blessed is that man.' But at this answer he was not a little moved, and swore by the blessed God, 'Let Ambrose and Austin say what they will, he would never believe but that works did help to justification. This was a lordly word of a prelate, and of a pillar of Christ's Church. But what meddling is it with such madmen. But yet peradventure you will say, how that I take a piece of the doctor, as much as maketh for my purpose, notwithstanding he saith otherwise in another place, which I do not bring. What is that to me? Yet is not my doctor thus avoided. For you cannot deny but this is his saying, and upon this place of Scripture, and this doth agree with Scripture, or else he doth expound Scripture evil. Wherefore you must answer to the saying of the doctor in this place, for this is the place that is laid against you, and this the place whereby



other places must be expounded. And if you dare deny him in this place, then will I deny him in all other places by that same authority; then are the holy doctors clearly gone. Nevertheless, holy Scripture standeth openly against you, which if you deny, then have I a cause to suspect you. Wherefore take heed what you do. But yet peradventure will ye say, that I understand not St. Ambrose, nor holy doctors, as my lord of Rochester said, how I understood not Tertullian: he had none other evasion to save his honour with. But this is not enough; but you must prove it, and other men must judge it between you and me. Here have I translated a great many of their sayings into English; let other men judge whether I understand them or not. Go ye to the Latin, and let us see what other sense you can take out. But, my lords, remember that our God is alive, whose cause we defend, afore whom, I dare well say, you are already confounded in your conscience; wherefore doubt you not but that terrible vengeance hangeth over you, if you repent not, which, when it cometh, cometh sharply. How are ye able to defend a thing that you cannot prove openly by holy Scripture? Say what you will, your conscience will murmur and grudge, and will never be satisfied with men's dreams, nor yet with tyranny. Think you that your laws and your inventions can be a sufficient rule for Christian men to live by, and to save their conscience thereby? Think you that your cause is sufficiently proved, when you have compelled poor men by violence to grant it? Then may we destroy all Scripture, and receive alone your tyranny. But, my lords, this matter is not righted by your judgment, but by our master Christ and his blessed Word, afore whose straight judgment you shall be judged, and that straightly. For when all your grace, all your honour, all your dignity, all your pomp and pride—briefly, all that your hearts do now rejoice in, shall lie in the dust, then shall you be called to a straight reckoning; it is no slight game, nor child's play. Mark it well, for it lieth on your neck. But what needeth me to lose many words, for if you are half

so full of grace as you say you are of good works, then will you reckon it better than I can move you."

The cry of the world against the doctrines of justification by faith, and of the sanctifying influences of the blessed Spirit, has always been loud in proportion to the unwillingness of men to submit themselves to the rule of holiness. A system which jealously ascribes honour to God as the source of whatever happiness can be enjoyed by man, excites but little opposition in the ranks of the proudest reasoners. How is it, we may fairly ask, that so much should be allowed to the wisdom and goodness of God in providing for the welfare of our race in external things, when in our spiritual capacity it seems necessary to contend that we are independent and sufficient to ourselves? Let us suppose that we were allowed to contemplate a world just called into existence, and the inhabitants of which were of such a nature that they might reasonably aspire to a high degree of happiness and glory; let us suppose that it was left to them to determine whether they would strive to perfect the least noble qualities of their nature, and remain contented with the lowest state of enjoyment, made as complete as it could be, or whether they would put forth their energies and strive to attain a state of unutterable glory. Under such a supposition every mind not grossly debased and enervated, takes the side of virtue and generous hope. But let us further suppose that the great Author of the system had given them every advantage in the one case, and none in the other. That he had furnished them with the knowledge to pursue, and the means of acquiring, whatever can delight the inferior appetites; that in this he had not left his creatures to themselves, but had constrained them to acknowledge that, had it not been for his bounty, they must have been soon bankrupt as to enjoyment; and that by this very circumstance they have been encouraged to revel in the present, and to forget the future. Supposing such a state of things to exist, who would not at once be ready to exclaim, How strange, that the Creator should have given a pre-

mium to low indulgence, by not leaving the creature dependent on itself for the means of acquiring it, while the higher state of felicity is seemingly to be sought by the unaided powers and wisdom of the same creature ! Should it be seen in the history of the race, that not one individual in it ever attained to the proffered glory, there can be little doubt that human reason would be ready to trace the melancholy termination of the system to the simple fact, that the creature was not left dependent upon himself in matters which concerned his inferior state, while he was left in charge of all the responsibilities of his being, in respect to his final and nobler destinies. But should we reverse the arrangement; should we behold the inhabitants of the new world left almost to themselves, in regard to the brief period of their existence in a lower capacity, but aided, protected, enriched with every help that could secure their perfection in glory; should we then express surprize, or imagine that any thing had been done inconsistent with the divine attributes of the Creator ? Nay; should we see that a triple wall of adamant had been built around these subjects of his mercy, that the choice armies of his kingdom were invisibly employed in protecting them from an enemy that hated them for their spiritual nature; should we be disposed to dispute the wisdom of the plan ? Let us view the matter yet in another light; and suppose that the creatures, notwithstanding the advantages they enjoyed, allowed themselves to be betrayed by the enemy, and to be taken captives, and to be deprived of every mark of their antient dignity and worth. Suppose that, in this case, their Almighty Creator were pleased to deliver them by an exercise of power and mercy which it was impossible for them to aid, and that, when he had effected their deliverance, he chose to invest them with the glory which belongs to his mercy, and to bestow upon them, of his own free bounty, the means of a holiness which should render them perfectly acceptable in his sight. Suppose that this were done, is there any thing in it which can be accounted contrary to the wisdom or goodness of a perfect being ? or would it seem that



the creatures to whom the mercy came were acting unwisely when they accepted with joy the proffered grace, and readily acknowledged that it was not their merits, but the mercy of their God, which had saved them?

Were we to examine carefully all the motives which contribute to strengthen the one great sin of the human heart—its rebellious and untameable pride—it would probably be discovered, that it is even more repugnant to the responsibilities of gratitude than to those of subjection and obedience. Sin hates the law, but it hates love more; and if it be obliged to cloak its deformity under a pretended acceptance of one of the two schemes offered, it will rather burden itself with the awful demands of justice, than yield to the benign influences of grace. This is but agreeable to its nature. A partial obedience to the law is compatible with the most corrupt and persevering delight in evil; but love requires the utter extinction of the corrupt principle, and the unlimited resignation of the heart to the will of God. The professors of Christianity, who wish to enjoy the advantages which the outline of the system may bestow, without yielding themselves to its ruling spirit, fix their attention upon its literal precepts; to these they pay a pretended homage, and immediately urge their claim to the privileges and honours of discipleship. When a corrupt age has obscured the light of the gospel, this unholy perversion of the truth easily obtains currency. It throws a broad shield over every other error; and it is to be guarded by those who think that gain is godliness, as the great charter of their rights.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the early preachers of the Reformation considered that the doctrine of justification by faith ought to form a very conspicuous point in their discourses. Dr. Barnes wrote of it with great force and zeal, stating it in scriptural language, and guarding it against those corruptions with which, it was urged, it seemed to be connected. “My lords,” he says, “this is the faith that doth justify, and that we do preach. And because it is given from heaven into our hearts by the Spirit of God, therefore it can be no idle thing, but it must needs do all manner of

things that are to the honour of God, and also to the profit of our neighbour; insomuch that, at all times necessary, it must needs work well, and also bring forth all good works that may be to profit and helping of any man. But these works are not done to justify the man, but a just man must needs do them; not unto his profit, but alone to other men's profits, even as our master Christ suffered hunger, and thirst, and persecution, and took great labours in preaching of his Word; yea, and also suffered death. All these things, I say, did he not to further or to profit himself, but for our merits, and for our profit. So, likewise, doth a just man his works. And as a good tree, in time of the year, bringeth forth good apples, not to make him good, for he is good afore, nor yet this apple is not to his profit, but unto other men's, notwithstanding, the good nature that is in him must needs bring it forth; so, likewise, the just man must needs do good works, not by them to be justified, but alone in them to serve his brother; for he hath no need of them, as concerning his justification. Wherefore, now here have you the very true cause of justification, that is, faith alone; and also the very true way and manner of doing good works; and how that no man can do good works but a justified man, as our master Christ saith, 'Either make the tree good, and then his fruit good.'"\*

He then answers the arguments of those who endeavoured to prove the contrary opinion; and, "First," he says, "cometh the fleshly and damnable reason, and she saith, 'If we be justified alone by faith, what need we to do any good works? What need we to crucify or mortify our flesh? for all these will not profit us, and we shall be saved though we do none of them all.' Thus did blind reason dispute with St. Paul, when that he had proved that God of his mercy had delivered us freely from the damnable bondage of the law. Anon, he judged that he might do what he would, for he was no longer under the law. To this St. Paul answereth, that if we obey unto the works of sin, then are we the servants of sin, and if we obey to the works of justice,

\* Matt. xii., 33.

then are we the servants of justice. So that, if we truly have that same faith that justifieth us, we shall desire to do none other works but those that belong to justification; not that the works do justify, but that we must needs do these works, as the very fruits of justification, and not as the cause of justification. And therefore those men that will do no good works, because they are justified only by faith, are not the children of God, nor the children of justification. For the living Spirit of God is none author of illness, nor of sin, but he crieth in our hearts, ‘Abba, Father!’ And of that is this a sure and an evident token, for if they were the very true children of God, they would be the gladder to do good works, because that they are justified freely. Therefore should they also be moved freely to works, if it were for no other purpose nor profit, but alone to do the will of their merciful God, that hath so freely justified them, and also to profit their neighbour, whom they are bound to serve of very true charity. Take an example: here is a thief that is condemned by right and the law to be hanged, whom the king’s grace of his mercy doth freely deliver from the gallows, and giveth him his pardon. Now this thief, thus delivered, will not keep himself a true man, nor do those works that belong to a true man to do, but falleth again to stealing, because the king pardoned him so freely, and reckoneth that the king is so merciful, that he will hang no thieves, but deliver them all of his mercy, without their deserving. Now, how think you? Will the king be merciful unto this thief, when he cometh again to the gallows? Nay, truly, for he was not delivered for that cause, but for to keep himself a true man.”

Sparing no advocate of error, however high his rank or pretensions, this great evangelical polemic thus speaks of the Bishop of Rochester. “Then cometh my lord of Rochester, and he saith, that faith doth begin a justification in us, but works do perform it, and make it perfect. I will recite his own words, *‘Per fidem initiari dicitur justitia solum, non artem consummari, nam consummata justitia non aliter quam ex operibus natis, et in lucem editis requiri potest; opera consummatè justificant;*



*fides primum inclinat.*’ What christened man would think that a bishop would thus trifle and play with God’s holy Word? God’s Word is so plain, that no man can avoid it, how that faith justifieth alone: and now cometh my lord of Rochester, with a little and a vain distinction, invented of his own brain, without authority of Scripture, and will clearly avoid all Scriptures, and all the whole disputation of St. Paul. But, my lord, say to me of your conscience, how do you reckon to avoid the vengeance of God, since you thus trifle and despise God’s holy Word? Think you that this vain distinction will be allowed afore Jesus Christ, for whose glory we do contend and strive, afore whom we do handle this matter? I do think, verily, that your own conscience do sore accuse you for thus blaspheming the holy Word of God. Wherefore, my lord, for Christ’s sake remember, that you are aged, and shall not long tarry here, and these vain distinctions that you have invented to the pleasure of men, and to the great perverting of God’s holy Word, shall be to your everlasting damnation. And at the least, nay, if you fear not the terrible vengeance of God, remember the shame of the world, and think not, that all men be so mad, and so unlearned, as for to be deceived by this trifling distinction, seeing that the Word of God is so plain against it.”

The notion that while faith begins, works complete, justification, is thus answered. “Now, what imperfection find you in children and in heirs? Christian men desire no more but this, and all this have they by faith only. And will you say that faith doth but begin a justification? Besides that, you know well that St. Paul doth prove, in all the whole Epistle to the Romans, and also to the Galatians, that faith doth justify, yea, and that by contention, against works. Now, how can you bring in works to make justification perfect, and St. Paul hath excluded them? Moreover, why did not the Jews, against whose works St. Paul disputeth, bring in this distinction for them? Briefly, what will you say to all the doctors that I have here recited, which say, that *sola fides*, only faith, doth justify? But, doubtless, if it were not to satisfy other men, this distinction were not

worthy an answer. Another damnable reason is made that is an open and plain lie, which is this. Thou sayest that works do not justify, nor yet help to justification, but faith only; therefore thou destroyest all good works, and wilt that no man shall work well, but alone believe. I answer, if there were any shame in men they might well be ashamed of these open lies. Tell me one, that is learned, that ever did say or teach that men should do no good works. Many there be that say works do not justify, as St. Paul and all his scholars; but no man denieth good works. But I marvel not at them, for they 'do but the works of their father, which was a liar and a murderer from the beginning.' I pray you, what consequent is this, after your own logic? 'Works do not justify;' therefore, we need not to do them, but despise them, for they be of no value. Take a like consequent; you say, that the king's grace doth not justify, therefore, you despise him; therefore, he is no longer a king. Also the sun and moon do not justify; therefore, you destroy them. But such a damnable lie must St. Paul needs suffer, when he had proved that faith only did justify. Then came your overthwart fathers, and said, 'Therefore thou destroyest the law, for thou teachest that it justifieth not.' God forbid, saith St. Paul, for we do learn the very way to fulfil the law, that is faith; whereby the law alone is fulfilled, and without the which all the works of the law are but sin. So do we likewise teach the very true way whereby all good works must be done. As first, a man by faith to be justified; and then a just man must needs do good works, which afore were but sin, and now be all good; yea, his eating, drinking and sleeping are good."

The saying of St. James was quoted against this view of Scripture doctrine, and a single passage, or rather a prejudiced interpretation of it, was made to weigh more than the concurrent testimony of the cloud of witnesses on the side of St. Paul. Such a mode of deciding the question was not according to the fair rules of criticism; and Dr. Barnes urged that, in an apparent discrepancy of statement, the isolated passage ought to be explained according to the spirit of the doctrines more

fully revealed, and not to be set up in opposition to principles strongly and clearly established by the holiest members of Christ's Church. "In all the Scripture," he says, "is not this article of justification so plainly and plenteously handled as it is by blessed St. Paul; this must every learned man grant. Wherefore, it standeth with reason and learning, that this saying of St. James must needs be reduced and brought unto blessed St. Paul's meaning, and not St. Paul unto St. James's saying. Now, therefore, inasmuch that both blessed St. Paul's, and also St. James's, meaning is, that good works should be done; and they that be Christian men should not be idle, and do no good, because that they are the children of grace, but that they should rather in their living express outwardly their goodness, received of grace; and as blessed St. Paul saith, 'to give their members to be servants unto righteousness,' as they were afore servants unto uncleanness. For this cause, I say, St. James's saying must needs be understood for to be written against those men, that boasted themselves of an idle and vain opinion, that they thought themselves to have, which they reckoned to be a good faith. Now, St. James, to prove that this faith was but an idle thing, and of none effect, doth declare it clearly, by that, that it brought forth, in time and place convenient, no good works; and, therefore, he calls it a dead faith."

Having illustrated these observations by quoting the instances of a dead and living faith given by St. James, he says, alluding to Abraham, "Mark, how faith wrought in his deeds; that is, his faith, because it was a living faith, brought forth, and wrought out that high work of oblation. Also his faith was perfect through his deeds. That is, his faith was declared, and had a great testimony afore all the world, that it was a living, and a perfect, and a right shapen faith, that Abraham had. So that his inward faith declared him afore God, and his outward works afore the world, to be good and justified. And thus was his faith made perfect afore God and man. Now, unto this do we all agree, that that faith alone justifieth afore God, which in time and place



doth work well, yea, it is a living thing of God, which cannot be dead, nor idle in man. But yet for all that, we do give to faith, and to Christ's blood, that glory that belongeth to them alone, that is to say, justification, remission of sins, satisfying of God's wrath, taking away of everlasting vengeance, purchasing of mercy, fulfilling of the law, with all other like things. The glory of these, I say, belongeth to Christ only, and we are partakers of them by faith in Christ's blood only. For it is no work that receiveth the promise made in Christ's blood, but faith only."

The sophistries of scholastic logic had been employed against Scripture. "There is yet another argument," says Dr. Barnes, "and that is this: 'Faith is a work; but works do not justify, therefore faith doth not justify.' Answer: Truth it is that we do not mean, how that faith for his own dignity, and for his own perfection, doth justify us; but the Scripture doth say that faith alone justifieth, because it is that thing alone whereby I do hang of Christ; and by my faith alone am I partaker of the merits and mercy purchased by Christ's blood; and faith it is alone that receiveth the promises made in Christ. Wherefore we say with blessed St. Paul, that faith only justifieth imputative; that is, all the merits and goodness, grace and favour, and all that is in Christ to our salvation, is imputed and reckoned unto us, because we hang and believe on him, and he can deceive no man that doth believe in him. And our justice is not, as the schoolmen teach, a formal justice, which is by fulfilling of the law deserved of us, for then our justification were not of grace and of mercy, but of deserving and of duty; but it is a justice that is reckoned and imputed unto us for the faith in Christ Jesus, and it is not of our deserving, but clearly and fully of mercy imputed unto us."

On the doctrine of free-will the continental reformers had written with an earnestness which indicated their strong sense of its importance to any system of profound theology. But the very nature of the subject rendered it less practical than that which regarded the consideration of faith, and its intimate relation to the all-important

plan of justification. It would have been impossible, perhaps, for men of acute minds and extensive knowledge to treat upon the doctrines necessarily examined at the Reformation, without being led to themes less essential to evangelical teaching, and tempting rather to metaphysical speculation than to the exercise of a humble faith. But while there may be points in the arguments of those who entered upon the abstruser debates of the period, which the humble believer would gladly have seen less boldly urged, it ought not to escape notice, that in every part of the controversy the deepest reverence was shown for the honour of God, for the purity of the gospel, and the establishment of truths the most important to the general interests of religion. The refinements of scholastic logic had hitherto been employed upon this subject with no other leaven than that which the pride of human genius might occasionally throw into the mass; but now they were blended with doctrines and sentiments that breathed of a holy faith, of spiritual love, and true evangelical humility. While the controversy remained in the hands of mere scholars and philosophers, it served but to excite doubt and perplexity, to carry the mind round a circle of questions, each depending on the other, but with none sufficiently answerable to render the deduction sure or of any practical worth. When the same controversy, at a later period, was forced on the attention of the ill-educated, the weak and enthusiastic, it led to the most melancholy results, diverting the thoughts of the poor, bewildered speculators from the contemplation of the love of God in Christ, persuading them to ask questions respecting fate and free-will, when they ought to have been simply inquiring in what way salvation had been offered them, and thereby leading them altogether from the consideration of the gospel as a good message, delivered in terms by no means perplexing to men of the simplest understanding, while they are only intent on asking, What must we do to be saved? In the earlier season of the Reformation, the controversy was in some measure free from the bad qualities which it exhibited at the periods alluded to. It was not unimbued with grace; it did not aim at

reaching heights to which reason aspires when dissatisfied with the gospel; nor was it in the hands of those who had not been well prepared to bear the burden of such a subject. We are hence less frequently distressed in perusing the treatises to which it now gave rise, than in studying those of either an earlier or later date. Dr. Barnes, like most of the divines of the age, found himself obliged to take part in the dispute, and his language happily illustrates that which we have said respecting the better features of the controversy at the period when he wrote.

The treatise in which he enters upon the debate is entitled, "Free-will of Man, after the Fall of Adam, of his natural strength, can do nothing but sin before God."\* After alluding to the words of our Saviour, "He that abideth in me," &c.,† he says, "Here it is open that free-will, without grace, can do nothing. I do not speak of eating and drinking, though that be of grace, but nothing that is fruitful, that is meritorious, that is worthy of thanks, that is acceptable before God. For he that hath not Christ in him is cast out; this is the first fruit of free-will: then withereth he; that is the second fruit. This withering helpeth him nothing to goodness; he must wither, let him do the best. Then is he gathered, and cast into the fire; this is the third fruit. What can he in the fire do? Nothing but burn. He cannot lie there as a thing indifferent, but he must needs burn, and he cannot come out of the fire by his own strength; let him intend as much as he can, his intentions cannot help him, nor yet further him. So that all the might of free-will, when he is left alone, is nothing else, but first to be cast out; and, second, to wither, so decayeth he; thirdly, to be cast into the fire. All this is worse and worse. Finally, he burneth. This is worst of all, for here is he past help; so that this is the strength that free-will hath, to bring himself to utter destruction. Now, where will our Dunsmen bring in their *bonum conatum*? They are so long in bringing of it in, that free-will is brought to the fire, and there can

\* Fathers of the Church, vol. i., p. 590.

† John, xv. 5, 6.



he neither save himself from burning, nor yet help himself out. But to this my lord of Rochester answereth, in a certain place, that free-will can do no good meritorious, *sed tamen non omnino facit nihil*. What is this to say but *nihil*, if he do no good, that is meritorious, nor worthy of thanks before God? I pray you what doth he but *nihil*? Our disputation is, what goodness that he can do, without grace; and you grant that he can do no goodness, and yet you say that he can do something."

It is a striking circumstance in most of the great controversies that have been carried on through a succession of ages, that the authorities appealed to seem to be the leaders first of one party and then of another, as the several objects on a long and winding road appear as we proceed to change their position, and to be now on this, and now on that, side. Augustine was venerated by the heads of the Church of Rome as one of those writers whose works might be cited with a confidence nearly approaching that which is due to the Word of inspiration. Yet this same author furnished arguments which the opponents of that church appealed to with no less confidence, and the greater the learning of the protestant polemic, the greater seems to have been his willingness to refer to the pages of the father. "Let us see," says Dr. Barnes, "how St. Austin understandeth this text of St. John: 'Lest any man should suppose that the branch of himself could bring forth, at the least ways, a little fruit, therefore,' saith he not, 'without me can you do a little, but without me can you do nothing; therefore, whether it be little or much, without him can it not be done, without whom is nothing done. One of two things must the branch needs do, either abide in the vine or else burn in the fire; if it be not in the vine, then is it in the fire.' My lord, where will you bring in here your something that free-will doth? St. Austin saith, 'Without grace can free-will do neither little nor much; for if she be not in Christ, she burneth in the fire.' Call you that *somewhat*? Where be now our Dunsmen, with their *bonum conatum*, *bonum studium*, and *applicationem ad bonum*? Here must they

needs lie in the fire, with all their good intents, with their good preparations, and their holy dispositions. Also St. Paul, 'We are not sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' What is this, that we are nor able to think any thing of ourselves? What can be a smaller thing than to think? And yet this small thing can we not do. It is also open that St. Paul meaneth not of the thinking that cometh by natural power, for that God doth not let, but letteth it proceed, after his first ordinance, as we have open experience in infidels. But here he speaketh of such a thinking, as is acceptable and thankful before God, and therefore followeth it, God hath made us worthy ministers of the New Testament. Here it is open that he speaketh of that thinking, that is a singular and a special gift of God, and not of the common gift of nature, for that were nothing to the ministration of the gospel."

The appeal to Augustine was either an instance of great controversial boldness, or a most successful conviction of the adversary out of the mouth of his own witness. But this was still more the case when the adventurous polemic dared to cite St. Barnard himself in support of his argument. "Let us see," exclaims the doctor, "what St. Barnard saith of this text. 'What shall we say? Is this alone all the merit of free-will, that he doth alone consent? Yea, doubtless: not that the same consent, in the which is all his merit, is not of God, when that we can neither think, the which is less than to consent, any thing of ourselves, as though we were sufficient of ourselves. These words are not mine, but the apostle's, the which give unto God, and not to his free-will, all manner of things, that can be good; that is to say, to think, to will, or to perform.' Hear you not, that all things that can be good St. Barnard giveth to God? Now, what strength has free-will? He can neither think good nor well, nor yet perform it. What remaineth? I know nothing, but either is included in thinking, in willing, or in performing, and all these are given to God. Also our master Christ saith, 'Shall men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of bramble bushes? An evil tree can bring forth no good fruit.' What meaneth our

Master, when he saith that grapes be not gathered of thorns? Nothing else, but that the fruit must be like the manner of the tree. And therefore saith he, ‘An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit.’ Now, can you not deny but that free-will without grace is an evil tree; therefore his fruit must needs be evil; he may well bring forth fruit, but it shall not be good. Is not all the power of free-will declared in these words, ‘He cannot?’ I pray you, what meaneth our Master Christ in these words, ‘He cannot?’ Christ said, ‘He cannot;’ and will you say he can? Also our Master saith, ‘You adders’ buds, how can you speak good things, seeing that you be evil?’ Had not these men free-will? And yet, saith our Master, ‘they could not speak good things.’ You reckon it but a small power to speak good, and yet small as it is free-will cannot do it; he may well speak, but it shall not be good. For how should he speak good that is evil of himself? How should he do good that knoweth no good, but is the very enemy of goodness, yea, and as much as lieth in him, he would there were no goodness?”

Again, alluding to the doctrine of Augustine, he says, “St. Austin doth declare what goodness that free-will deserveth without grace, saying, ‘O, cursed free-will without God! We have experienced what free-will can do without God, therefore are we miserable, because we have experienced what free-will is able to do without God. Behold, man was made good, and by his free-will was he made an evil man. When shall an evil man, by his free-will, forsaking God, make a man good, when he being good could not keep himself good; and now that he is evil, shall he make himself good? When that he was good, he kept not himself good, and now that he is evil, shall he say, I make myself good?’ Here is the very strength of free-will; by his strength are we made miserable, and that doth experience learn. And yet we boast free-will. St. Austin called it, ‘cursed free-will,’ and will we call it, ‘blessed free-will?’ Is not this a goodly freedom, and great power to bring us to this everlasting misery? This is our *bonum conatum* and *facere quod in se est*, and *preparare se ad gratiam*,



with other damnable dreams that we have, whose conclusions are nothing else but to bring us to damnation. You see St. Austin's words be so plain, that no man can avoid them."

It has ever been the custom of human reason, when pressed strongly by the authority of religion, to search for apparent contradictions in the doctrines deemed essential by believers to the perfection of their faith. This plan is as successful with weak or prejudiced minds as it is disingenuous. It is manifestly impossible that two objects far apart from each other should be fairly compared, if they can never either be brought together, or be submitted to the measurement of an independent medium. They may be like, or they may have contradictory qualities. So long as they can be brought into no comparison on certain principles proper to their nature, it is mere presumption to say that they either agree or disagree. Now there is an *a priori* certainty that the several parts of a divine revelation must agree with each other; but should it be objected that some of these several portions of the system ought not to be regarded as really such, because they have an apparently contrary tendency, we would inquire whether the doctrines spoken of be of such a nature as to admit of comparison, or whether if, when singly viewed, they may be defended by Scripture, there be any necessity for our viewing them as depending on our power of harmonizing truths? It is easy to conceive that many things may be necessary as the parts of a revelation which owe their importance to our immediate wants, and which, applied to our relief, have performed their office in the manner in which it was intended they should act. The reconciling of seeming discrepancies may be the office of a higher order of intellects; that we cannot effect it, may be ascribed either to our want of discernment, or to the absence of those media without which no really distinct ideas can be compared. A religion like the gospel ought not to be expected to deal in explanations, or to present things under the aspect which may best suit the merely curious or inquisitive mind. It is a message to the erring and the miserable;

an offer of pardon to the condemned; of life to the dying. As it is based, therefore, only on the mercy of God, it will speak but the language adapted to purposes of compassion. The pride of reason, the vain pomp of its triumphs, are necessarily unrecognized, or rather treated with severe condemnation, in a system which knows man under no other character than that of a fallen and corrupt creature. What, therefore, was difficult before, must remain difficult still; and if, in the address of the Eternal Spirit to the souls of men, there be unavoidable allusions to certain awful mysteries of being, it is not the part of man to make out of these allusions a system of difficulties, or if they cannot be explained so as to suit his own narrow comprehension, then to deny the truth of one-half of the propositions submitted to his belief, in order that the other may be credible to his understanding.

These observations will apply not merely to the bold scepticism of one class of reasoners, but to the inconsiderate zeal and presumption of some of those who take up the argument against them. The history of religious controversy affords many lamentable instances of inconsistency. Evangelical faith teaches us to receive the gospel as most significantly the Word of God. It is with statements that we have to do; and the proper argument of the Christian, is the reasonableness of his trust in God, of his faith as such, not the submission of every possible subject of thought to the power of his understanding. But in defiance of this plain truth, and one which is in other respects so strongly contended for, Christian writers are frequently tempted into an ambitious subtlety of expression, or a startling particularizing of matters but dimly seen in the awful depths of eternal wisdom; so that we might almost suspect they had left their vantage ground on the rock of faith, and thrown aside the armour of the Spirit, to contend with the adversary as speculators rather than Christians, retaining only the vocabulary of their profession, and contenting themselves with being on the side of the gospel, as if position was every thing, and spirit and consistency nothing.

Dr. Barnes contemplated, with extreme horror, the presumption of those disputants, who would reduce the doctrines of the gospel to their own standard of right. His language, in this respect, may be regarded as exhibiting the sentiments of most of those devout minds on whom the reviving light of heavenly knowledge was pouring its bright and fervent beams. "But now cometh the damnable reason," he exclaims, "and fleshly wisdom, and will dispute and say, If our free-will can do no goodness, what need God to command so many good things? What need God to give those commandments, that he knoweth will be impossible for us? And if they be impossible, what right is in him, that damneth us for that thing that is impossible for us to do? I answer, O, thou blind and presumptuous, and damnable reason! where hast thou learned of any other creature, to inquire cause of thy Maker's will? or else to murmur against the ordinance of thy living God? What hast thou to do to require a cause of his acts? He hath made thee without thy consent and counsel, and may he not set laws and commandments to rule thee by, at his pleasure, without thy counsel? Thou art worthy of no answer, thou art so presumptuous; and there is no godly answer that will satisfy thee. Nevertheless, I will stop thy blaspheming mouth, by thine own wisdom, to thy great shame."

After this vehement rebuke of those who opposed themselves, he undertakes to answer them, as he says, by principles of their own. "This thing," says he, "you must grant me, that thy God is essential goodness, and is nothing but goodness. Wherefore, he can command nothing but that is good, just and righteous. Which things, if thou do not or be not able to do, thy Maker may not let his goodness undone, because of thy haughtiness, or for thine unableness. And if thou be not able to do those good things that he commandeth thee, there is no fault in the Commander, nor yet in the commandments. Wherefore then dost thou grudge against Him without a cause? But yet wilt thou murmur and say, how that He knoweth how they are impossible for thee. Truth that is, He knoweth it. Then



wilt thou say, Wherefore doth He command them to me? O, thou presumptuous creature! it were sufficiently answered to thee to say, that it is his pleasure so to command. What couldst thou say more? What occasion hadst thou to murmur? What wrong hast thou? But I will go farther. Thy Maker knoweth that they be impossible for thee. He knoweth also thy damnable and presumptuous pride, that reckonest how thou canst do all things that be good, of thine own strength, without any other help. And to subdue this presumptuous pride of thine, and to bring thee to knowledge of thine ownself, he hath given thee his commandments, of the which thou canst not complain, for they are both righteous and good. And if thou complain because they are impossible for thee, then consider thy damnable pride, that thoughtest thyself so strong, that thou couldst do all goodness. But what wilt thou now do? These commandments are given, and cannot and shall not be changed, to satisfy thy presumptuous pride. Whereof wilt thou now complain? God's commandments be reasonable, they be good, they be righteous, and they be laudable. Shall all these things be destroyed, to satisfy thy pride? Nay, not so. But thou shalt rather remain, with all thy pride, under the damnation of these commandments. What sayest thou thereto? Canst thou avoid this? Canst thou say, but this is right? Canst thou save thyself from danger? Canst thou avoid thy damnation by all thy carnal wisdom? Nay, verily, for He that is thy adversary is omnipotent. Wherefore, say what thou wilt, so must it be, for it is God's ordinance, which may not be changed. But now wilt thou ask, what remedy? No remedy, but this only, to confess thy weakness, to confess thy pride, to acknowledge thy unableness, to grant that these commandments are lawful, holy and good, and how thou art bound to keep them, and to give laud and praise to God for them, and to go to thy merciful Maker with this confession, and to desire Him that He will help thee, that He will be merciful unto thee, that He will strengthen thee, for thou art too weak; that He will give thee His Spirit, for thy spirit is too fleshly to fulfil

these spiritual commandments. And doubt thou not, but thou shalt find Him both merciful and also gracious, for He gave thee these commandments for that intent, secretly declaring both this pride, and also thy weakness, that thou mightest seek, and call unto him for help."

The prevalence of error in one part of a religious system will generally deprive that which remains pure of its proper efficacy. Cases, therefore, far less provocative of zeal than that which employed the thoughts of this eminent servant of Christ, might have aroused the attention of minds intent on the reformation of opinion. That their language should be strong when their feelings of mingled sorrow and indignation were excited to the uttermost, is in no wise strange; and the weighty charge which was brought against the Bishop of Rochester in the following passage might be supported, it is probable, on positive evidence, and then no apology could be needed: but supposing that an inference was drawn from his mode of argumentation which represented his opinions as more opposed to truth than they really were, still much might be said in excuse for a zeal which had been directed by the purest love of holiness, and only now erred in its courageous opposition to doctrines fatally adapted in their general tendencies to lull the conscience and the heart to sleep. That the Bishop of Rochester could, consistently with charity, be charged with intended Pelagianism, may be fairly doubted. But it cannot be forgotten, that the man who had the boldness so to brand his loose system of Christian opinion, was soon to be the victim of the authority which he thus assailed; and that if he be found guilty of a want of charity in charging the bishop with Pelagianism, the adverse party must, at least, have been guilty of a far greater offence in accusing so learned and good a man of universal heresy, and then burning him for his supposed mistakes.

In the passage alluded to, it is said, "The Pelagians did reckon that they had got a great victory, when they had made this carnal reason, that God would command nothing that was impossible. Of this reason did they glory and triumph, and thought that they must needs

have some natural strength and power to fulfil the commandments of God, seeing that God would command nothing impossible to man. Of this same reason doth my Lord of Rochester and all his scholars glory, unto this same day. But let us see how St. Austin answereth them. ‘The Pelagians,’ saith he, ‘think that they know a wondrous thing, when they say, God will not command that thing, the which He knoweth is impossible for man to do. Every man knoweth this, but therefore doth he command certain things that we cannot do, because we might know what thing we ought to ask of him: Faith is she, which by prayer obtaineth that thing that the law commandeth. Briefly: He that saith, If thou wilt, thou mayst keep my commandments; in the same book, a little after, saith, He shall give me keeping in my mouth. Plain it is, that we may keep the commandments if we will; but because our will is prepared of God, of Him it must be asked, that we may so much will, as will suffice us to do them. Truth it is, that we will, when we will, but He maketh us to will that thing that is good.’ Here have you plain, that my Lord of Rochester’s opinion and the Pelagians’ is all one, for they both do agree, that the commandments of God be not impossible to our natural strength. But St. Austin saith, ‘They be impossible.’ And therefore be they given, that we should know our weakness, and also ask strength to fulfil them. For faith by prayer doth obtain strength to fulfil the impossible commandments of the law. Here have you also, that God moveth us, and causeth us to be good willers, and giveth us a good will; for else we would never will but evil. Here is also to be noted, that the Pelagians and our Dunsmen agree all in one; for they both say, that the grace of God doth help man’s good purpose, so that man doth first intend and purpose well; and, as Duns saith, disposeth himself by attrition to receive grace, and then God doth help him. But the truth is contrary, for there is no good purpose in man, no good disposition, no good intent, but all is against goodness, and clean contrary against all things that agree with grace, until that God of his mere mercy cometh, and giveth grace, and changeth a



man's will unto grace, and giveth him will to will goodness, yea, and that when he thought nothing of goodness, but doth clearly resist all goodness. This doth St. Austin prove in these words: 'The Pelagians say, that they grant how that grace doth help every man's good purpose, but not that he giveth the love of virtue to him that striveth against it.' This thing do they say, as though man of himself, without the help of God, hath a good purpose and a good mind unto virtue, by the which merit proceeding afore, he be worthy to be holpen of the grace of God, that followeth after. Doubtless that grace that followeth, doth help the good purpose of man, but the good purpose should never have been, if grace had not preceded. And though that the good study of man, when it beginneth, is holpen of grace, yet did it never begin without grace."

This is followed by an application of the whole to the opinions of the prelate who had taken so active a part against the doctrines of the Reformation. "Here it is open," says the writer, "that the Pelagians grant as much of grace, as my Lord of Rochester doth, and all his Dunsmen, which teach that man may have a good purpose, *bonum studium*, and a good mind, and a love to grace, of his own natural strength. The Pelagians grant even the same. But here you see how St. Austin is clear against them. But now let us hear Duns' words. 'A sinner may, by the natural and common influence of God, consider his sins as a thing that hath offended God, and as a thing contrary to the law of God, and letteth him from reward, and bringeth him to pain, and by this means may he hate and abhor his sin.' This calleth he *attrition*, 'Whereby there is a disposition,' saith he, 'or a merit in a man of *congruence*, to take away mortal sin; and this attrition is sufficient for a man that shall receive the sacraments, and, *quod non ponat obicem*, that is, that he have no mortal sin actually in his will. This is sufficient, and also a necessary way to receive grace.' This is ten times worse than the Pelagians' sayings, for they grant that man must needs have a special grace, to perform his good purpose. And Duns saith, that man may perform his *attrition* of

his natural power : yea, and this *attrition of congruence* is a disposition to take away mortal sin, without any special grace.”

In the summing up of his argument, he says, “ Briefly, a great heresy, more contrary to Christ and His blessed Word, can no man learn, and yet must he be taken for a great clerk and a subtle doctor, because he pleaseth the flesh. But shortly have I openly proved by invincible Scriptures, and by doctors of great authority, that free-will of his natural strength, without a special grace, can do nothing but abide in sin. Feign, invent, excogitate and dream, as many holy persons as we can, and as many subtle distinctions, as many good attritions, as many good applications, and all they be but sin, till grace come. Yea, our sleeping, our eating, our drinking, our alms, our prayers, our singing, our ringing, our confessing, our mumbling, our mourning, our wailing ; briefly, all that we can do, is but hypocrisy, and double sin before God, till the time that He of His mercy chooseth us. For, as He saith, ‘ You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.’ ”

Alluding in the last place to the general resistance made among the higher churchmen of his day to the doctrines of grace and election, he says, “ Then all their study, then all their wisdom, then all their labour, then all their might, then all their power, then all their craft and subtlety, then all their friends, that they can make in heaven and in earth, are nothing else but to oppress the Word of God. Yea, and they think all too little, for the more it is preached, the more they grudge, and the worse they be. After this manner was the heart of Pharaoh indurated, when that the Word of God was declared unto him by Moses, and he had no grace to receive it. Then the more that Moses laboured in the Word, the more sturdy was he in withstanding of it, and always harder and harder. This is also evidently seen in the corrupt nature of man, for the more a thing is forbidden him, the more desireth he to do it. But what need we to go into Egypt to fetch an example to prove this? Look of mine own countrymen, if they be not openly indurated, and so blinded that no man is able to

defend them by any reason or law, and therefore they take themselves to violence and oppression, as Pharaoh did, which be the right signs and tokens of induration. For the more the Word of God is preached, and the verity is declared unto them, the more sturdy and obstinate they be against it. And all their studies, all their wits, all their counsels, all their crafts and mischiefs, with all glossings and lyings, and with blaspheming of God and His preachers, are nothing else but to keep the Word of God under, and to withstand that verity, which they know in their conscience must need go forth, though all the world say, nay ! And therefore will they hear no man, nor reason with any man, but even say as Pharaoh did, ‘I will not let the people go.’ But if they were not indurated, and the very enemies unto the verity, they would, at the least ways, hear their poor brethren, of charity, and know what they could say, and if they could prove their sayings to be true : then, if they had the love of the verity, as they have but the shadow, they would give immortal thanks to God, and with great meekness, and with a low spirit, receive the heavenly verity, and thank their brethren heartily, that they warned them of such a damnable way, now in good time, and season. But there is no love to the verity, nor yet fear of God, nor regard to the danger of their souls. And why ? for they be children of induration and of blasphemy. And therefore the more it is preached, the more are they obstinate.”\*

Such were the doctrines promulgated in this country, at the time, when the Church stood free from the trammels of Rome, but was still doubtful as to the acknowledgment of the gospel as the sole rule of faith. The language of Barnes and his fellow-labourers is evidently that of men who, though assailed by all the weapons of temporal authority, felt themselves endowed with a strength which impelled them to attack, rather than apologize and defend. They saw too clearly the signs of a glorious day in that solemn dawning hour which called them forth to their labours. They stood upon the mountains, while many that were to follow them

\* Fathers of the English Church, vol. i., p. 590-625.



had still to explore the path by which the ascent might be made. With an almost prophetic eye, they pierced the mists which rose around them, and saw in the distance, and in the arid waste-lands of superstition, a temple which, while it bore the venerable marks of an apostolic edifice, was resplendent also with much of the purity and beauty of its earliest days. This quickened their steps; this gladdened their hearts. They knew what was to be, and they spoke as men who lived either in the days that preceded the corruption of the Church, or who saw it cleansed from the defilements which had so long despoiled it of its glory.

The sentiments of these holy men were adopted by Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and others of like spirit. But it ought never to be lost sight of, that, while the latter were slowly advancing in knowledge, the former were doing the work of Evangelists, and for their zeal and courage were allowed to become sacrifices to the rage of the common enemy. The fact that such men perished in the flames, when some of the highest offices of the Church were held by advocates of the Reformation, is one of the most melancholy anomalies that history can present. Sad, however, as is the circumstance in itself, it affords an incontrovertible proof, that the more important part of the work of reform in the English Church was effected, not by the State, not by those who managed the machinery of its influence, but by men who went into the field armed only with the spiritual weapons of a spiritual warfare. Our veneration for Cranmer, our thankfulness for the mighty helps subsequently afforded by the Government, are not the less because we do not allow them to blind us to the fact that God's Spirit was in effective operation before the plan of Providence brought into use the instruments of temporal power. Cranmer, indeed, ought to be viewed in the twofold character of Henry's minister, high in ecclesiastical rank, and of a theological writer and teacher of religion. It is to his influence in the former capacity that we look, when considering the Reformation as established by the decisions of the Court or Legislature. But while it seems that too much credit is ordinarily given to the

political agency employed in this great work, and that, consequently, the merits of most of the persons officially engaged have been overrated; as writers or preachers, the same men soon after contributed as powerful and independent an aid in the furtherance of the Reformation as the advocates of the gospel, whose sentiments we have been just considering. To their seasonable aid, in this respect, may be traced, indeed, the complete triumph and establishment of evangelical doctrine. That which would never have been done had they effected nothing more than that which has so much of splendour in the mere outward appearance, was, in reality, brought to pass by the labours to which they devoted themselves in their more private capacity. The writings of Cranmer have an unction, a spiritual fervour, which must have operated powerfully on the hearts of a people willing to be taught, and anxious to become acquainted with the converting graces of the gospel. We see the genuine reformer far better in these emanations of his earnest spirit than in his counsels, weakened and rendered unstable, as they appear so often to have been, by the circumstances of his position. The other distinguished men who rose, like him, to rank and dignity, but who exercised, at the same time, the graces with which the Holy Spirit had endowed them, devoting the powers of their minds, and the affections of their hearts, to the teaching of the gospel, are to be viewed in a similar manner. They were prevented from directly working out the plan, to the perfecting of which they looked as the end of their labours, by the character of the age, their obedience to the sovereign, and the numerous considerations which arose out of the changes continually occurring in the state of their party. But, as in the case of Cranmer, the political delays did not retard the progress of evangelical opinion; and when the interests of a great revolution are pending, it is opinion, not authority, that will finally determine the issue. Whether this be for good or evil, depends upon the nature of the ruling element. In the Reformation, that element was heavenly truth; and as it diffused itself, and penetrated into the souls of the people, opinion became, for the first

time in the land, the power of God. The great and good men of the day were raised up for the purpose of bringing about this sublime change. According to the influence of their labours in this respect, they are to be venerated as our fathers in the gospel, and their works furnish the best materials for determining the real nature of the Reformation, and of the means by which it was substantially established.

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## CHAP. IX.

STATE OF THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND,  
THE NETHERLANDS, AND NORTHERN NATIONS, AT OPEN-  
ING OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

WE have pursued our notice of the progress of the Reformation in England sufficiently far to show what were its general prospects when the Council of Trent was preparing for its important debates. Scotland had received a portion of the light which was spreading so rapidly over the more favoured portion of the country. But the time was not yet come for its bursting the fetters of spiritual tyranny. The few glorious names that dignify her annals at this period are written in blood. Their voices were scarcely heard above the tumult of scorn and hatred which rose at their early pleadings in the cause of the gospel. The bishops and abbots, and other dignified ecclesiastics, were possessed of revenues which infected them with the same love of pride and luxury as that which had destroyed the virtues of the clerical orders in most other countries; while to this common source of evil were added others peculiar to the nation, to its unsettled government, and to the untamed, and, as yet, unenlightened spirit of the people. The first preacher of the gospel in Scotland was Patricius Hamilton, who, with royal blood in his veins, possessed a mind and disposition which ennobled him



far more than his ancestral honours. Devoted to the Church, he was early appointed to the rich abbey of Fern, and his powerful connections would shortly, it is probable, have made him master of the most commanding stations that an ecclesiastic could enjoy. But God intended him for other things. At the University of Marburg he became acquainted with the opinions of Luther; and subsequent inquiry convinced him, not only of their conformity with Divine truth, but of the obligation which rested upon every man of learning to make them known to the world, as showing the only path of salvation. Soon after his return from Germany he began to preach the doctrines of the Reformation in all their force and extent. Justification by faith; the loss of free-will by sin, and other parts of the evangelical creed, formed prominent points in his discourses. The attention of the people was forcibly roused by his appeals; and the same testimony was again given to the value of the Gospel by those who humbly desired to find the means of grace and pardon, as had been so freely rendered in other countries and to other preachers.

Suspicion soon awoke, and jealousy and indignation were instantly roused by her whispers. Alexander Campbel, who had been long distinguished for his skill in scholastic disputation, invited Hamilton to St. Andrew's, where, it was said, they might carefully and calmly examine the nature of the doctrines proposed by Luther and his followers. But instead of the young abbot finding himself engaged in an inquiry with a man whose desire it was simply to discover the truth, he soon saw that he must submit his cause to the judgment of numerous haughty prelates, who desired nothing so earnestly as the suppression of every opinion, with or without examination, which might militate in any way with the doctrine of a passive and uninquiring submission to the prevailing creed. Persuasion was employed to induce him to recant; and then threats, and every species of preparatory severity. But neither succeeded; and the estimable young man, to the grief of his friends, and the disgrace of the dominant Church, was

condemned to die in the flames.\* Alexander appears to have acted either with the most infamous duplicity or with a timidity scarcely more excusable. Hamilton had confided to him his innermost thoughts, and he had reason to believe, from the answers of the Dominican, that the love of truth was uppermost in his heart. But at the time of his trial this miserable man stood foremost to accuse him of heresy, and on his word he was condemned. More horrified at the spectacle of so much treachery than alarmed at the approach of death, the heroic martyr exclaimed, "O, thou most iniquitous of men! who condemnest those things which thou knowest, and didst a few days before confess, to be true, I summon thee to the tribunal of the living God." Struck with phrenzy as this terrible denunciation sounded in his ears, Alexander shortly after died a madman.

The constancy with which the martyr bore his sufferings, and the remarkable circumstance of his accuser's death, made a deep impression on the minds of the people; and some of the clergy even were rendered better disposed than before to weigh the arguments in favour of the reformed doctrines. Among the latter was Alexander Seton, the King's chaplain, whose increasing respect for the Lutherans becoming manifest, he soon found it necessary to make his escape into England. In the year 1533, the Benedictine monk, Henry

\* The doctrines which he was accused of holding were thus arranged: "1. That the corruption of sin remains in children after their baptism. 2. That no man by the power of his free-will can do any good. 3. That no man is without sin, so long as he liveth. 4. That every true Christian may know himself to be in the state of grace. 5. That a man is not justified by works, but by faith only. 6. That good works make not a good man, but that a good man doth good works; and that an ill man doth ill works, yet the same ill works truly repented make not an ill man. 7. That faith, hope and charity are so linked together, that he who hath one of them hath all; and he that lacketh one, lacketh all. 8. That God is the cause of sin in this sense, that he withdraweth his grace from man, and grace withdrawn he cannot but sin. 9. That it is a devilish doctrine to teach, that by any actual penance remission of sin is purchased. 10. That auricular confession is not necessary to salvation. 11. That there is no purgatory. 12. That the holy patriarchs were in heaven before Christ's passion. 13. That the Pope is Antichrist, and that every priest hath as much power as the Pope." On being required to plead to the accusation founded on these articles, he said, "That he held the first seven to be undoubtedly true, whereunto he offered to set his hand. The rest were disputable points, but such as he could not condemn, unless he saw better reasons than yet he had heard."—Arch. Spotswood, *Hist. of Church of Scot.* B. II., p. 63. Buchanan, *Rerum Scot.*, lib. XIV., sec. 32.

Forest, was burnt to death, and both the Pope and the clergy were continually urging upon the King the duty of persecuting the heretics with greater vigilance. Such was the desperate hate which inspired the ruling churchmen against the reformers, that when James resolved to save some victim who had sought refuge in his palace from the pursuit of the persecutors, they resolutely declared that even the monarch himself had no right to spare those whom the Church had condemned. A grant of some of the revenues of the clergy put the monarch for a time in sufficient good humour with the Pontiff to do all his bidding. The reformers were accordingly treated with as much severity as the case would allow. But, as in other places, it seems to have required both more courage and more use to reconcile even the cruelest minds to the sight of burning piles, than fell to the lot of the earlier persecutors.

It was not till the year 1538 that fresh sacrifices were offered to the fell demon of superstition and tyranny. Then two Dominicans perished in the flames; and the next year a Capuchin friar named Russel, with a youth only eighteen, died in a similar manner. The latter, it is said, trembled when he beheld the preparations for torture, and seemed inclined to escape the terrible fate which awaited him by a sudden recantation of his belief. At this moment his companion in suffering roused his spirits, by reminding him of the truth and power of the gospel. The appeal succeeded, and the youth, hastening to the stake, exclaimed, "I despise thee, O death! and praise my God, for I am prepared." In the following year a nobleman and four ecclesiastics perished in the flames. One of the latter was the canon Forest, a man of learning and heroic courage. Having been assailed by the Bishop of Dunkeld with an accusation of heresy, imbibed from the study of the Scriptures, he defended himself with the arguments naturally suggested by the subject. The bishop replied, that if he could find a good gospel, or epistle, which would tend to the support of the holy Church, he might always preach therefrom. To this the martyr replied, "I have the Old and New Testament; but I find therein no wicked epistle or gospel." "And God be praised," continued the bishop,



“I have lived many years without knowing either the Old or the New Testament, but well satisfied with the use of my breviary and pontificate. If Forest will trouble his head about useless things, he will rue the day.”

The accession of the celebrated Cardinal Beatoun to the archiepiscopal see of St. Andrew's threw a yet heavier gloom over the apparent prospects of the reformers. A sterner zealot could not have been chosen to fill this important situation. He forgot every other claim upon his heart, his conscience, or the common rule of justice, in the one demand of the Church for submission or vengeance. This rendered him fit for the office which the Church of the day intended him to perform. Had he possessed any of the feelings which might have made him waver in the course to be pursued, he would have been unfit for the station, as it was then offered to the successful aspirant after rank and power. Scotland required men of a more hardy courage in every walk of life than most other countries at this time; and Cardinal Beatoun had all the qualities which could give vigour to a false zeal, and supply the mind with countless arguments to justify injustice when the ally of authority.

As bold as he was fierce, he publicly declaimed against the conduct of the Court in employing so small a share of its power in putting down the heresies which disturbed the repose of the Church. Whether the Government could have done that for not attempting which he so bitterly accused it, may admit of a reasonable doubt. The authority of the Crown, indeed, was not the instrument which seemed best adapted in these times to effect the object nearest to the hearts of churchmen. By whatever hand wielded, it rarely struck the blow at the right moment, or in the right place. The despotism of politics and of superstition are two different things; and though they may sometimes appeal to each other, and borrow from their several stores to carry on the favourite design of a season, they are always too jealous and suspicious of the object sought in the end to act long in unison. This is the safety of mankind. Archbishop Beatoun would have hurried the Scottish monarch into a perse-

cution as bloody as that of our English Mary. But, happily for humanity and religion, the reasonableness of his policy was not so evident to the King, or his counsellors, as it was to the prelates with whom he acted. He was obliged, therefore, to content himself with imprisoning the most obnoxious of the reformers, and to wait patiently for the hour when either his plans might be more matured, or the enemies of the Church should be less able to evade his hostility.

It is easy to perceive, from the nature of the opinions circulated by the reformers, how deadly must have been the enmity of such a man as Beatoun, to their views and pretensions. Their very first principle struck at the root of ecclesiastical pride and dominion. As the King, according to the code of chivalry, was the fountain of honour, so was the Pope to the clergy of this age the source of power and grandeur. To doubt either his sanctity, or supremacy, therefore, was sure to expose the inquirer to the resentment of the hierarchy; and the common assertion of the reformers was, that the Pope had no other species of authority than that which pertained to every bishop; an authority strictly pastoral and spiritual, and granted by Christ, not for the fostering of individual pride, or aiding personal aggrandizement, but simply for the good of his people at large. These were the sentiments expressed by the favourers of the new opinions; and they now numbered in their ranks men of the greatest talents, and of the most undisputed virtue. The celebrated George Buchanan, to whose pen the world is indebted for so eloquent a description of these times, was himself among the sufferers; and had he not found means to escape the vigilance of his gaoler, would probably have had to expiate his offence not by will, but in the flames.

An inquisition was now established; and Scotland seemed given over entirely to the dominion of Beatoun and his party. The prisons were filled with persons suspected of Lutheranism, and a fearful harvest was soon to be reaped by those who instead of regarding believers as fit for the garner of the Lord, viewed them but as the tares which were only to be gathered in order to

be cast into the fire. Had not the temporary influence of Henry VIII. prevented the King from yielding himself entirely to the counsels of the clergy, the success of their present proceedings would have been far more decided. But Henry beheld with deep concern the subjection of his nephew to the corrupt and haughty prelates who governed the church of the country. He had favoured the introduction of the writings of the reformers into Scotland, and had seized every opportunity for expressing his hearty desire that James would listen to the arguments in favour of a general reformation. This checked, for an instant, the blind and facile readiness of the King to follow the dictates of Beatoun. Many of his nobility also were decidedly inclined to adopt the new opinions, and cherish those who taught them. To reasons of this kind were added the yet more powerful suggestions, that by a reformation of the Church, the royal revenues might be increased. La Grange, the chief minister of the court, urged every argument that could be thus advanced with all the energy of a sound politician. James allowed himself to be convinced, for a time, that the advice tendered him was good. His cupidity was awakened; his pride disturbed; and his resentment at the picture drawn of the corruption and avarice of the bishops, threw a veil over the meanness of the real motives which induced him to think of a reform.

But the cardinal archbishop was too watchful to be defeated by a distant rival, or by the efforts of a statesman who could do little more than argue and persuade. Means were soon found to alarm the King at the consequences of the step which he seemed about to take; and, not to be behind their political opponents, the bishops promised to replenish his coffers if, instead of entering into a confederacy with Henry, he would immediately recommence hostilities. Their representations prevailed; and the weak and unfortunate monarch was hurried into a war which terminated in his signal discomfiture. The accession of the infant Mary, and the disorders which attended a disputed regency, changed the prospects of both parties. Cardinal Beatoun had



employed every means to possess himself of the chief power of the State ;\* and had he succeeded in his designs, the reformers would have been exposed to greater dangers than those which they had hitherto encountered. But, happily for them, the country had too much dread of the cardinal's ambition, to leave him in the enjoyment of his ill-acquired power. A brief period only was allowed for the experiment which he was so anxious to make ; and the authority he had usurped was then transferred to the Count of Arran, the next heir to the Crown, and a man of singular kind and amiable disposition. This was an event of the highest importance to the reformers. The new Regent had been long known as friendly to their cause. He had even shared their dangers, and was one of those whose names appeared on the list of proscribed heretics. His accession to power was followed by manifestations of the earnest attachment which he still felt for the evangelical doctrines of the party. Two of the most distinguished of its preachers were appointed to minister in his palace ; and the triumph of the gospel over ignorance and tyranny seemed near at hand. These hopes were further increased by the proposal of Maxwell, one of the lords of Articles, to allow the people the use of the Scriptures in an English translation. This was the object nearest the heart of every reformer. It could not escape notice, that so long as the people were left dependent upon their preachers merely, they remained in a state of bondage, which might lose its most odious features, but could never possess the characteristics of a state of spiritual liberty and intelligence. To minds, therefore, earnestly and conscientiously devoted to the sublime labour of emancipating mankind from the slavery of error, the free circulation of the Word of God must ever appear as a preliminary absolutely essential to the complete success of their design.

\* Buchanan, lib. XV., sec. 1. The cardinal, hearing that the King was deceased, did suborn a priest, called Henry Balfour, to form his last will, whereby it declared that he had committed to the cardinal, the Earls of Huntley, Argyle and Murray, the government of the realm during his daughter's minority. This will he caused to be published in Edinburgh on the Monday after the King's death.—Spotswood, B. II., p. 71.

The proposition of Lord Maxwell was received with unhesitating applause by the Regent, and most of the nobility. An effort was made by the archbishop and his party to put a stop to the design, by endeavouring to get it referred to a synod of the clergy. But his intentions were too well understood to succeed. The Regent threw the whole of his power and popularity into the opposite scale; and the subtlety and haughty zeal of the cardinal could not weigh them down. An act was accordingly passed which rendered the circulation of the English Bible legal throughout the kingdom. Every thing now appeared to justify the hopes of those who had expected that the regency of the Count of Arran would establish the Reformation in Scotland, as that of England had followed the favourable dispositions of the monarch. But a new illustration was about to be afforded of the important truth that, though the co-operation of the great and powerful may be valuable, it is not the staff upon which the ministers of Christ's Church can rest with confidence. The Regent of Scotland had his political plans and interests to work out and guard. His popularity greatly depended upon his success in managing the relations of the country with England. Unfortunately he failed in this respect. Even his friends found it difficult to support his measures. He lost his influence with those who expected to be raised by his prosperity; and those who only desired to see the cause of righteousness established under his sway, began to lose their confidence in his firmness and capacity. Affairs now assumed a darker aspect every day. The love of authority, or that which is at least equally dangerous, a desire to retain the meaner satisfactions with which it is usually accompanied, acted with a fatal influence on the mind of the Regent. His dispositions were well understood by the enemies of the people and of religion. It was soon discovered, that it would need but little management to bring him back to the Church, and to induce him to sacrifice all his views respecting the Reformation to the promise of support in the station which he occupied.

To the sorrow of the reformers, this weak but amiable

man did eventually fall into the snare spread for him by the artful prelate. He publicly renounced his connection with the Protestant party, and in the cathedral of Stirling proclaimed his return into the bosom of the Church of Rome. This took place in the year 1543, and it was soon seen by the preachers of the gospel and their followers, that they were once more at the mercy of Cardinal Beatoun. To destroy every hope of justice or freedom which they might have cherished, a law was passed directing their apprehension and condign punishment; and this with the apparent concurrence of the Regent, who had himself so short a time before professed the very doctrines, the belief of which was now constituted a capital crime. The persecution which followed this barbarous enactment was conducted under the immediate direction of the cardinal, who, adding to his other dignities that of papal legate, had an almost unlimited control over the lives of his unfortunate countrymen. Many perished by his sentence, and their melancholy history sheds a sad but strong light on the chronicles of the day. We see by its fearful rays the features of persecution brought out into full relief. The spirits that animate it are discovered at their work of preparation; the very anatomy of ecclesiastical tyranny is displayed; and it moves before us, a monster of the deep floods of darkness with which sin has covered the fair face of the earth.

The martyrdom of George Wishart directed to the proceedings of the cardinal the eyes of many who might have remained comparatively unmoved at the sacrifice of meaner victims. This excellent man was descended from a noble family; and his acquirements and great piety rendered him worthy of the confidence with which he was regarded by his Protestant associates. After completing his studies at Cambridge, he had taken up his abode in the town of Dundee, and his earliest labours were devoted to the instruction of the inhabitants of that place in the knowledge of the gospel. His exertions were crowned with success; but in proportion to the willingness of the people to hear his discourses was the enmity of the cardinal to the preacher. At length he



was prohibited from any further exercise of his ministry; the reason assigned for this measure being that he excited tumults. "No," said he, in reply to this accusation, "the preaching of God's Word raises not tumults, nor is the rejecting of his messengers the way to prevent disturbances. You drive me from you, and refuse to hear an ambassador of Christ; God will, therefore, send you other messengers who will not be afraid of either burning or banishment."\*

Though prevented from exercising his charitable zeal at Dundee, Wishart did not cease to publish the doctrines which he regarded as offering the only means of salvation. He visited various parts of the country, and wherever he came performed the office of a faithful missionary. When the doors of the churches were shut against him, he betook himself to the fields, and there swayed the hearts of multitudes who stood ready to hear and rejoice in the sublime message from heaven, the announcement before so little understood, that the Almighty was willing to regenerate, and save mankind by the merits of Christ alone. Many were moved by his fervent and affectionate addresses, who did not imbibe the spirit whence they sprung. A burst of indignation, therefore, against the priests who shut the doors of the churches was frequently the immediate consequence of his preaching. To quiet this excitement, he appealed to the character of the gospel, and the object for which it was given. When tidings reached him that the plague was raging at Dundee, he boldly returned thither; and amid the most fearful ravages of the disease, poured forth the stream of living waters, fresh from the fountain of salvation. He was here again the minister of peace and order. When the people, enraged with those who had so long oppressed and deceived them, would have satisfied their fierce resentments, he put aside even

\* Spotswood, B. II., p. 76. He added, "If it be long well with you, I am not led with the Spirit of truth; and if trouble unexpected fall upon you, remember this is the cause, and turn to God by repentance, for He is merciful." The pestilence, it is said, broke out four days after he left the town. He took for his text on returning the words of the 107th Psalm, "He sent his Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction."

the appearance of enmity, and embraced the priest obnoxious to public hate, as one whom he earnestly desired to own a brother in the gospel.

It is said that Wishart now began to feel that his career was at an end; and that he sought to prepare himself for the death which awaited him, by an untiring application to the exercise of prayer. With an almost prophetic spirit, he warned his followers that his departure was at hand; and that they might expect, for a season, the continuance of sorrows; but that after no long period of suffering, the gospel would be made known throughout the land, and convert the people to righteousness.\*

In the course of his wanderings, he had taken up his abode with the laird of Ormeston, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. This was made known to a meeting of the clergy held in that city; and it immediately appeared to the cardinal a fit opportunity for attempting to crush so dangerous an enemy. Messengers were, therefore, despatched to demand him of the gentleman with whom he was lodged. They failed in the effort to make him their prisoner; nor could his hospitable host be prevailed upon to give him up, till compelled to do so by the arrival of the cardinal himself, backed by the authority of Bothwell, who pledged his word that Wishart should suffer no harm. It was impossible to doubt what would be the issue of the affair. But to give the proceedings an appearance of justice, the clergy assembled in considerable numbers, and began with seeming earnestness to examine the opinions of the accused, now closely confined in the castle of St. Andrew's. Heresy presented itself at every stage of the inquiry, and it now

\* His friends entreating to know the cause of his apparent dejection, he said, "I will tell you, that I assuredly know my travel is nigh at an end; therefore pray to God for me, that I shrink not when the battle waxeth most hot." On their expressing sorrow, he continued, "God will send you comfort after me. This realm shall be enlightened with the light of Christ's gospel as clearly as ever was any realm since the days of the apostles. The house of God shall be built in it: yea, it shall not lack, whatsoever the enemies shall devise to the contrary, the very cape-stone. Neither shall this be long in doing, for there shall not many suffer after me. The glory of God shall appear, and truth shall once triumph, in spite of the devil. But, alas! if the people become unthankful, the plagues and punishments which shall follow will be fearful and terrible."—Spotswood, B. II., p. 78.

only required the sentence of the chief magistrate to consummate the treason against justice and religion. This, it seems, would soon have been obtained, had the Regent been simply left to himself, or to the influence of the cardinal. But his movements were narrowly watched by his relative, David Hamilton, a man of stronger mind, and sounder principles.\* Addressing him with the firmness of a patriot, and the enlightened spirit of a Christian, he said, “that he knew not by what counsel he could have been induced to allow the servants of God, who stood accused of no other crime but this, that they preached the gospel of Christ, to be so oppressed by men guilty of the basest vices, and animated by a cruelty worse than that of wild beasts: that he ought especially to remember, how he had formerly favoured the opinions which he now thus allowed to be treated with contumely, and even by his public acts endeavoured to establish them as forming the only true system of faith.” To this he added, “Think, then, what will be the language, what the opinions of men in after times concerning you: think of the benefits which have been conferred upon you by the bounty of Heaven; and think of the King, a man hateful to you, suddenly snatched away in the midst of the very course which you are now pursuing. He who precipitated him into this gulf of ruin, is seeking to involve you in the same destruction. Recal to mind the victory accorded you by the people, without blood or slaughter, a victory over enemies trusting to their strength, and which, while it covered you with glory, overwhelmed them with shame. Consider for whose sake you desert your God, and assail your friends. Awake, and cast off the darkness which evil men have poured around you.”

With these, and similar exhortations, the faithful relative of the Regent roused him from the fatal torpor in which he seemed to have been plunged. Alarmed at the representation of his danger, he resolved to proceed no further in the attempts against Wishart. A letter was accordingly despatched to the cardinal, and the haughty dignitary read, with undissembled rage, that if he

\* Buchanan, *Rerum Scot.*, lib. XV., sec. 33.



allowed the prisoner to come to harm, he might have to satisfy offended justice by his own blood. But it was too late to stop the progress of the persecution. The cardinal knew how little he had to fear from the threats of a man so weak and unstable as the Regent. He replied to his letter, therefore, by declaring that he had only asked for his signature to Wishart's sentence for the sake of form, seeing that, in reality, the condemnation of heretics depended not on his jurisdiction.

Acting in this spirit of defiance, he ordered Wishart to be brought from his place of confinement, and to be present at a discourse preached against heresy, and in support of the bishop's right to judge and condemn such as were guilty of that crime. When this was done, the accused was placed at the tribunal constructed in the castle of St. Andrew's, where the wretched farce was performed, and the ceremonies of a trial were regarded as sufficient to atone for the violation of every essential of justice. The night following this demonstration of the intentions of his enemies, was passed in fervent prayer, and the intended martyr, though unable to prevail against the wickedness of men, found himself powerful with his heavenly Father and Saviour. Early in the morning, two Franciscan monks brought him the message that he was to prepare for death as speedily as possible. This intimation was accompanied by the inquiry, whether he would confess his sins to them, according to custom? He calmly answered, that as he had nothing in common with them, he could not speak freely to them, or derive any comfort from confession. "But if," he added, "you would render me a kindness, obtain permission that the learned man who preached yesterday may come and converse with me for awhile." The Franciscans yielded so far as to inquire of the bishops, whether the request of Wishart might be granted? As Viniramus had been employed by the prelates themselves, no reasonable objection could be made to his visiting the prisoner. But it was well understood by Wishart that the preacher had more knowledge of the gospel, and greater love for the truth, than had been suspected, and that it was his timidity only which pre-

vented him from openly declaring his real sentiments. On his entering the room where the pious confessor lay, he was overwhelmed with grief; but having repressed his emotion, he entered into a long discourse with him on subjects proper to the occasion, and ended by asking him, if he would not receive the Lord's Supper? "Willingly," replied Wishart, "if I can partake thereof according to the institution of Christ; that is, in both kinds."\*

The representations which Viniramus made respecting the state of Wishart's mind, and the apparent freedom of his opinions from any error so deadly that it deserved condign punishment, were listened to by the cardinal with irrepressible wrath. He denounced the messenger himself; and having consulted with the other bishops, whether the sacrament ought to be administered to the prisoner, it was decided that an obstinate heretic, condemned by the Church, could be admitted to none of its benefits. While the angry spirit of his persecutors thus sought to deprive him of every means of consolation, he found in the principal officer of the castle, and the attendants, a noble disposition to soothe his sorrows by their kind sympathy and conversation. On being invited to partake of their morning meal, just before his execution, he said, "Yes, gladly will I; and more gladly than I have for many days, seeing that I now know you to be good men, and joined with me in the body of Christ." Turning to the governor, he said, "And you do I exhort, in the name of God, and by that love which you bear to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to sit at this table for awhile, and receive the word of exhortation, and hearken while I pray over that bread which we are about to eat, as brothers in Christ; and then I will bid you farewell."†

When the table was spread, and the little party had composed itself to devout attention, Wishart began to discourse, with a calm and sedate eloquence, on the Lord's Supper; on the torments to which he was so soon to be exposed, and on death; intermingling his

\* Buchanan, lib. XV., sec. 34.

† Spotswood, B. II., p. 81. Buchanan, lib. XV., sec. 37.

thoughts on these subjects with many exhortations to peace and charity, as the only bond of perfectness. At the conclusion of his address, he offered up thanksgivings to God, and breaking the bread, distributed a portion to each of the persons present. In the same manner he gave the cup; and having again exhorted his fellow-worshippers to constancy, and offered up another prayer, he retired to his room, where he composed his mind to a fit state for enduring the fearful trial which was coming upon him.

He had not been long engaged in this manner when two of the executioners appointed by the cardinal entered the prison. Proceeding immediately to their work, one of them clothed the victim in a black linen garment, and the other bound about his body numerous little bags filled with inflammable powder. Thus prepared, he was led into the ante-room, to await the completion of the pile on which he was to suffer. The cardinal, with a large body of the clergy, and attended by a numerous band of armed men, impatiently awaited his appearance. Nothing had been neglected which could add terror and solemnity to the scene. As soon as the victim was brought forth the trumpets sounded, and it might have been imagined, that the Church was about to encounter, in battle array, the hosts of the powers of the air, instead of being quietly seated, by its representatives, under a silken canopy, to enjoy the spectacle which its barbarity had prepared. But such were the monstrous consequences of supineness on the part of the world, and a misdirected zeal on that of the clergy, in by-gone ages. The Church had been personified, and was then worshipped with an idolatry as destructive to true religion as any that had ever prevailed among the most benighted races of mankind. Here was a man whose doctrines, compared with the gospel, tallied at least as closely as the dogmas of the dominant Church agreed with the best supported of antient traditions; but his death was regarded as essential to the safety and honour of that Church; and, with an indecency of which only the most barbarous of nations are ever guilty, the heads of that Church, its most tried supporters, its great



ornaments, met together to shout their triumphs in the ears of their dying enemy, and to impress, if possible, upon his soul, as it winged its flight to eternity, that the curse which it bore away was pronounced by lips that were most familiar with the name of Christ.

In the midst of the sound of trumpets, and of the shouts of those who hoped thereby to prove their fidelity to the Church, the venerable George Wishart ascended the pile. It is difficult to say, whether the folly or the barbarity of the scene were the greater. But while it displayed in the most odious light the wickedness of the persecutors, it served to exalt the worth of that religion against which their rage was directed, and to shed a ray of glory on the head of him who so readily suffered in its defence. The pile was fired while the martyr was raising his hands to heaven in humble supplication for its blessing. At this moment the keeper of the prison was standing so near the stake that the flames scorched him. This, however, did not prevent his persevering in the charitable determination to soothe by his prayers and sympathy the agonies of the sufferer. To his exhortations Wishart replied, "This fire, indeed, is troublesome to the body, but it hurts not the soul. And he who now so proudly looks down upon us from his lofty seat, shall, within a few days, lie not less ignominiously than he at present reclines ostentatiously and arrogantly."

The hardihood of the cardinal's proceeding might, in an earlier age, have silenced the voice of complaint. But there were now too many strong minds and hearts awake in the kingdom to suffer such strokes of policy to succeed. Disgust at the cruelty, indignation at the injustice, of the execution, filled the bosoms of all who belonged not immediately to the prelate's party.\* Public

\* Jam etiam plures, et apertius erumpentibus, vi doloris, querelis, de cardinale tollendo coire, et ad libertatem recuperandam, aut vitam projiciendam, hortari. 'Quam enim spem dignitatis reliquam fore, sub arrogantissimo sacrificulo, eodemque tyranno sævissimo, qui bello adversum Deum hominesque recepto, non inimicos modo, id est, qui aut rem haberent, aut pietatem colerent, sed cuicumque esset leviter offensus, eum, velut pecus ex hara, suæ libidini mactaret? Qui publice bellum et civile et externum alat, privatim meretricium amores nuptiis copulet, nuptias legitimas pro arbitrio dirimat, domi cum scortis volutetur, foris in cæde innoxiorum et sanguine debacchetur.'—Buchanan, lib. XV., sec. 38.

liberty seemed to be endangered by his defiance of the royal authority; and there was plainly nothing to hope if, in such a posture of affairs, the ecclesiastical law should be allowed to smother the common law of the land. When men's thoughts are converted into an element of wrath, it is not often that much time passes before it becomes concentrated in some few souls, who appear to have been only waiting for its terrible inspiration to carry into effect their own plans of vengeance. While Cardinal Beaton had raised up countless enemies by his public conduct, his private character rendered him not less odious to his more immediate connections. Among these was Norman Leslie, son of the Earl of Rothes, a young nobleman of fiery temper, and ill-prepared to brook the mingled insolence and injustice with which he had been treated by the prelate. His last attempt to obtain satisfaction for the injuries he had received having failed, he unbosomed himself to his friends; and his feelings, as he described them, assumed the aspect of so many witnesses against the archbishop, or of judges whose sentence it became the duty of honest men to execute. This fatal power, which intense wrath gives to the language of the injured, urged the companions of Hamilton to join him in a plot which involved them all in deadly guilt, and removed them, at once, from the ranks of those who were the enemies of the archbishop only for the gospel's sake, and who would have acted towards him only as their heavenly Master would have done had He been still on earth.

With the fear, and the consequent suspicion, so natural to those who have made themselves hated by their fellow men, the cardinal had begun to fortify the castle of St. Andrew's, and to take such other precautions as were demanded by his present position. Norman Leslie knew, therefore, how difficult it would be to surprise his intended victim; and even if he could, what certain destruction must attend the execution of such a design, devoted as the people in the neighbourhood of the castle were to the interests of his enemy. But his resolution had been taken, and the question no longer was, whether he should seek revenge or not, but in what way he might

satisfy his rage at the least expense to his future safety. In prosecution of the scheme, which he at length laid down, he chose sixteen of his most trusty and courageous associates, and with them repaired to the scene of action. The watch kept about the castle rendered it difficult for them to effect an entrance; nor would it have been possible, had not the gates been opened with the first gleam of morning light, to admit the workmen employed about the fortifications. Two of the conspirators entered unobserved, with these people, and their business was to watch a fit opportunity for seizing the porter at the gate, after which they were to give a signal for the approach of their companions. Things succeeded to their wish; and the whole of the party soon stood within the court of the castle. Four of the band took up their station at the door of the cardinal's chamber; while the rest employed themselves in quietly dismissing his attendants and others, their own daring resolution, and the surprise of those whom they assailed, giving them an easy victory. The fortress was now their own, and as yet no blood had been shed. They had but one object to effect, and they pursued it with a singleness of purpose which adds fresh terror to the exhibition of their revenge. The cardinal was alone, and helpless, when they entered his room. Not a hand could be raised in his defence; and when the conspirators plunged their daggers into his heart, an old, weak man was falling under the attack of sixteen assassins. The picture thus presented to the imagination is dark and appalling; and Christians, as they contemplate it, learn to acknowledge, that it matters little under what banner worldly spirits contend, whether it be in the form of a cross, or of an eagle; whether its motto be drawn from the gospel, or from some high sounding tradition; the spirits of unconverted men are under the dominion of the same principle of evil, deceiving and being deceived, and having no other purpose in what they do and think but their own glory and selfish satisfaction.

The death of Cardinal Beatoun might, under other circumstances, have been regarded as a great deliver-



ance for the Protestant party.\* But that is little likely to be of advantage to any set of men which comes through the perpetration of an odious crime. The removal of so fierce and powerful an enemy as this prelate inspired those with the hope of peace who calculated the chances of events rather than the force of principles. To the few who would rather see truth established by means the most painful, if conformable to its nature, than behold it triumphing as the ally, for a time, of violence, cruelty and pride, the mere lessening of danger, or the removal of outward obstacles, can afford no pleasure when obtained by unlawful means. The whole history of Jesus Christ is one continued exemplification of this solemn fact. He might in a moment have defeated opposition; have compelled assent to his doctrine; have set his apostles, at once, upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; or called down his legions of angels to sweep away the hosts of blasphemers who hated Him and his Father. But this would not have been to establish truth according to its proper nature. There would have been nothing in such a mode of proceeding, in his case, contrary to divine law, or the most perfect justice. But even this was not sufficient to render it fit in the eyes of heavenly wisdom. To prevent its adoption it was enough that it agreed not with the character of his religion, and of the pure truths which it involves. If the design and spirit of the gospel had not been contradicted in so many other ways, it would be almost impossible for us to account for the fact, that while Christ himself would employ no force

\* The rumour of this fact being quickly dispersed through the country, every man commended, or condemned it, as his passion led him. They who stood in awe of his power did highly commend the enterprise, and praise the doers; and of that sort divers came to congratulate the fact, offering to take one part with them. Others who were more wise and moderate, though they disliked not the fact, as hoping to enjoy their profession with greater liberty, did yet abhor the form and manner, judging it to be foully done, especially on the part of Norman, at whose hands he did not look for any harm. And indeed few or none of those who had an hand in that work escaped an extraordinary judgment: God thereby declaring, that howsoever it pleaseth Him in the execution of his judgments to use sometimes the ministry and service of men, yet doth He not allow of their wicked dispositions, and for most part faileth not to reward them with the same, or the like, that they do unto others.—Spotswood, B. II., p. 84. Buchanan, lib. XV., sec. 42.

to establish his religion, so many of his professed followers should have thought themselves justified in violating every principle of law to carry forward their individual views. Nor has this course been pursued by some capricious impulse. It has been calmly adopted, and as obstinately defended. It has not been the line of action pursued by individuals only, when they doubted the efficacy of their prayers, or could not control the burning indignation which raged in their hearts. It has been followed to its very limits by sects and churches, and has been as diligently defined as if it were the path of life itself. Norman Leslie did but that which had been taught him by the corrupt example of almost every age. We shudder at the instance of individual wrath justifying itself under the pleas of party wrong and religious zeal; but the moral of the lesson ought to teach us to pray against the fatal error of supposing that even the gospel itself, or the cause of Christian liberty, can ever be aided by means in themselves unchristian.

Such was the commencement of the Reformation in Scotland, and the state of its Church, at the period to which we have brought down our narrative of affairs in other countries. Extending our view again to what was passing on the Continent, we shall first briefly speak of the condition of the reformers in the Netherlands, and the more northern provinces of Europe, and then direct our attention to that most important division of the subject, the state of the Church in Switzerland.

The united provinces had been under the sway of Austria since the year 1477. They were thereby exposed to an influence which the most favourable circumstances only could render salutary. The natives were proud and enterprising; jealous of their liberties, and anxious to enjoy as much of luxury and independence as industry combined with courage could bestow. They only needed a country less exposed by position to powerful rivals, to rise into a great nation. But while prevented by the smallness of their territory and their political situation, from becoming great or remaining free, they continued to cherish in their bosoms the qualities which consorted better with their wishes than with their actual

state. The introduction of the Spaniards among them brought new feelings into play. Repeatedly irritated by oppression, they were as frequently soothed by the advantages which they evidently reaped from their connection with that rich and magnificent people. Charles V., at times, had so much reason to be satisfied with their loyalty, that he regarded them as a portion of his subjects most deserving of his favour and protection. But this did not prevent their frequently showing a most bitter hatred to the inferior agents of his will, or to the Spaniards in general. The temporal historian derives from these causes an ample harvest of stirring incidents, while tracing the course of their fortunes, and the philosophical observer has a subject for speculation as interesting as can well be afforded by the juxtaposition of people and nations of different characters.

It is rarely that a body of men, strongly imbued with the conviction, that they have a right to political independence, can be made to believe that they ought to render implicit obedience, an uninquiring homage, to ecclesiastical domination. This their unwillingness to submit to control in the latter instance, any more than in the former, must not be confounded with the holy anxiety of spiritual minds to free themselves from the yoke of bondage. It is a different sentiment, and has its origin in a cause which has not the most remote connection with the other feeling. But it is a principle mighty in its influence, and one which cannot be properly kept out of sight by those who would fain trace the changes in religion, as well as the reformation of religion, to their right sources.

Thus long before the influence of Luther began to be felt in the Netherlands, the people exhibited signs of a feeling little accordant with the stern spirit of the Roman Church. The terrors of the Inquisition were known by report; and the avarice of the clergy would of itself have been sufficient to disgust a people wishing to become rich and renowned as citizens. Two powerful motives to desire religious independence were furnished by these things, and had the country been left to the free development of its proper forces and inclinations, it



would probably, within less than a century, have worked out for itself an ecclesiastical, if not a religious reformation. But there were writers who seemed raised up to give light to those who had received their first impulse from more worldly sources. The pious Gerhard Groot lived at a period too early to allow of our bringing him into the ranks of those who were appointed to this great work ; but even the memory of a man who said, that he would not, for all the gold of Arabia, have the care of souls for a single night, must have exercised some power on the minds of the better disposed of the clergy. Cardinal Cusa, who was sent into the Netherlands, about the middle of the fifteenth century, to preach indulgences, or promote in some other way the interests of Rome, is said to have spoken so freely on the errors of his church, that he might be classed among those who prepared the way for a reformation of its most serious abuses.

But it is to John Wesselus that the noble praise is attributed of having first opened the minds of his countrymen to the value of a faith established on the Word of God. This early reformer was born at the beginning of the fifteenth century. From his infancy he had indulged a passion for learning, which enabled him to take advantage of whatever light the most approved literature of the age could afford. This consisted, for the most part, of the writings of the schoolmen ; but it served to quicken his spirit of inquiry ; and as he passed from one university to another, he continued to accumulate fresh stores of both thought and knowledge, till he rose, by the strength of his own purified understanding, above the clouds with which the favourite sophistries of the times had shut out the sun from less patient inquirers. When at Heidelberg, where he taught Greek and Hebrew, by the invitation of the Elector Philip, he openly confessed, that he believed there was much of error in the doctrine, much superstition in the worship, and much tyranny in the government, of the Church. From Heidelberg, he went to Louvain, and thence to Paris, in both of which places he displayed so much acuteness and erudition, that while some gave him the

pompous title of the Light of the World, others called him the Master of Contradictions. Weary at length of disputations which had little effect upon either the minds, or hearts, of those whom they seemed most to interest, he retired to Groningen, where he passed the rest of his days in the quiet inculcation of those doctrines which best consort with the Word of God, and which have a value for penitent hearts infinitely superior to all the boasted refinements of philosophy, or the yet more confident pretensions of teachers who come in the name of the Church, rather than in that of Christ. Nothing, perhaps, can better show the nature of this venerable man's opinions than the remark which he makes respecting the authority of the Church as constituting the rule of faith. "I confess," says he, "that I ought to depend, in regard to this rule of faith, on the Church, *with* which, but not *in* which, I believe. But I believe *in* the Holy Spirit, who regulates the rule of faith, who spoke by the apostles and prophets. I believe *with* the holy Church ; *according* to the holy Church, not *in* the holy Church ; because to believe, is an act of worship, an office of theological virtue, to be rendered to God alone." In the same manner he remarks, "I do not think that whatever Boniface VIII., or, after him, Clement, or Gregory, ordered, ought to be considered part of the rule of faith." These were bold sentiments for the middle of the fifteenth century ; and though it is not to be supposed that Wesselus had clear conceptions on all points of evangelical religion, he had evidently escaped the most prevalent errors of his age and country.\*

\* The title first given him was *Lux Mundi* ; but as soon as he had begun to preach the gospel, this was changed into *Magister Contradictionis*. Rudolphus Agricola is mentioned as the intimate of Wesselus ; and it is reported, on the authority of Melancthon, "that, Joachim Van Groningen used to say, that when he was a young lad, he had seen those two friends sighing and lamenting together over the corruptions of the Church. He heard them also declaiming against the profanation of the eucharist in the mass, the celibacy of priests, the extolling human works and traditions." John Van Goch was another of his associates ; and of this divine it is said, that he had the courage to assert, that the writings of Thomas Aquinas, Albertus, and other schoolmen, did more obscure and perplex than illustrate the truth : that we ought to follow only the Holy Scriptures, and to make them the touchstone of all other writings, not even excepting the decrees of Popes and Councils. The making vows of things unrequired was rejected by him as unprofitable to godliness, and inconsistent with Christian liberty. He con-

Some preparation, therefore, had been made by the servants of God for that season of light and grace which they hoped might be approaching. The appearance of Erasmus afforded a still more encouraging prospect of success to the cause of the gospel. That great man set out with dispositions which might well incline every hopeful mind to regard him as a true champion of the faith once delivered to the saints. His future career did not fulfil these promises of early zeal. But the influence which he really exercised must not be lost sight of. His vast ability, and a reputation corresponding to his talents, secured for his opinions a degree of attention which would have been rendered to no less distinguished a reasoner. Several preachers of the gospel were labouring in different parts of the Netherlands, when he began to surprise his countrymen by the extent of his erudition, and the eloquence of his treatises. His natural acuteness led him to the discovery, that the errors with which the old system of theology was rife, were directly opposed to the freedom essential to the development of minds like his. Personal pride, or ambition, therefore, would have been sufficient to urge him forward on the side of reform. But with all his faults of character, and though, unhappily, not possessing the graces of a really evangelical spirit, Erasmus was far from being an uninterested spectator of the movements which were taking place on the side of true religion. His earliest writings were sufficiently imbued with indications of a right spirit to bring upon him the charge of having borrowed his notions from the works of Luther.\*

demned the chimerical doctrine of supererogation. He complained that Christianity was degenerated into Judaism and Pharisaism. He maintained that we are only justified by faith and the merits of Christ ; but he subjoined that godly men did really and actually continue in sin, but that it was not imputed to them, but forgiven for Christ's sake.—Brandt., *Hist. of Reform. in Low Countries*, vol. i., p. 33.

\* That he had done so he denied in strong terms. "Luther," he says, "was as unknown to me as he could possibly be to any one. I had no time to read above one or two pages of his writings. This, not because I was unwilling to do it, but on account of my numerous occupations, which left me no leisure. Yet some pretend, as I hear, that he assisted me in the composition of my works. If he has written well, no praise is due to me ; if badly, I deserve no blame. The life of the man is approved by universal



The doctrines of the Reformation, when once made known in the Netherlands, produced a deep impression on the minds of the people. This is sufficiently proved by the statement, that in the course of the reign of Charles V., not less than fifty thousand persons suffered on account of their attachment to the new opinions, or their opposition to the Church of Rome. That monarch manifested, from the dawn of the Reformation in this part of his dominions, a most fierce hostility to its supporters. This, it has been observed, was the more remarkable, since, at the very time when he allowed the sword of persecution to do its worst in Flanders, he was treating the reformers of Germany with indulgence, or, at least, forbearance. His reasons for this conduct cannot be fully understood; but it is highly probable that we shall be nearest the truth, when we search for an explanation of the mystery in no other cause than the simple fact, that, in the one case, that is, among the unfortunate Belgians, he could do as he chose, while in the other, or among the Germans, he was restrained by the power, the vigour, and the good sense of the people.

In 1522, Francis Hulst and Nicholas of Egmond were appointed inquisitors for the Netherlands. Now began that series of persecutions which give so sanguinary a hue to the early notices of the Reformation in that country. Now it was that the venerable names of Voes, Esch, Henry Zutphen, and others of like mind, began to shine as beacons in the midst of a dark world; and that the religion of Jesus Christ seemed once more to involve with its pure profession the necessity of suffering. The circulation of the Scriptures, while it tended to increase the number of those who were willing to endure any thing for Christ's sake and the gospel's, served also to counterbalance the weight of their trials and afflictions. From those blessed foun-

consent; and that is no slight thing in his favour, that the integrity of his conduct is such, that not even his enemies can find any good foundation for calumny. Wherefore, if I could obtain sufficient leisure to read him, I should not arrogate to myself the right of pronouncing sentence on the writings of so great a man, although mere boys dare venture to call this erroneous and that heretical. Neither am I ignorant how dangerous a thing it is to treat that lightly whence monks and priests are wont to gather so rich a harvest."—  
Epis. cccxvii.

tains of light and consolation they drew continual supplies of strength; and they were enabled, in the hour of agony, to bear testimony, not only to the power of the grace which wrought within them, but to the infinite value of the truth which had made them free.

The city of Antwerp was especially distinguished by the increasing number of those who adopted the reformed doctrines. There crowds would assemble on the banks of the Scheldt to listen to the Word of God; and as the preacher addressed them from the prow of some vessel, the hearts of the people, awake to every association that the gospel could create, swelled with the recollection of the times when the Saviour himself so published the message of salvation by the sea of Galilee. The principal instructor of the multitude on these occasions was an Augustine monk. Being prevented one day from fulfilling his accustomed task, a young man, named Nicholas, ventured to take his place. He preached on the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes; and the people went away deeply affected by the lesson which he had taught them. But he was without protectors; and having been secretly seized, was, the next day, put into a sack and drowned. In the neighbourhood of the same city, a parish priest was accustomed to preach to the people in the fields about his dwelling. His sermons were directed against the chief errors of the Roman Church; and in preaching on the mass, he said, "We priests are worse than the betrayer Judas, for he sold the Lord Christ, and then gave Him to those to whom he had sold Him. But we sell Him to you, and do not give Him to you." This was sufficient to rouse the cry of heresy against him, and the price of thirty florins was set upon his head.

Things continued in this state at Antwerp for many years; the reformers enjoying none of the advantages of a settled ministry, yet pursuing, with no slight degree of resolution, the path pointed out to them by those who, from time to time, undertook the task of their instruction. To this want of regular teachers may be ascribed, perhaps, the unfortunate varieties of opinion which soon began to appear among them; and the

rapid growth of Anabaptism, which at length almost swallowed up the purer forms of doctrine inculcated by Scripture. In other parts of the country a similar activity was shown on the part of the reformers; but their efforts, however noble, were desultory. It was as if an army had been raised, consisting of many brave spirits, who, contending without leaders and without order, were speedily dispersed, and separately destroyed. At Tournay an Augustinian monk was burnt in the year 1529, because, having married, he would not declare his wife a harlot, the condition upon which both life and liberty were offered. In the same year a law was passed, which condemned all to the flames who, having formerly confessed themselves in error, were now found to entertain the proscribed opinions. Those who had not been before convicted, were, if men, to be beheaded, and, if women, to be buried alive. The general confiscation of the goods of heretics was also now established, and thus another class of motives for fermenting persecution was introduced, and the basest of feelings, feelings in their nature far less tolerable even than those leading more directly to religious hate, were brought to bear against the unfortunate reformers.

In the midst of the calamities with which the evangelical party in the Netherlands had thus to contend, the Emperor appointed his sister Mary, widow of the late King of Hungary, to the government of the provinces, a station left vacant by the death of Margaret of Savoy, who had long ruled the country with as iron a sway as her nephew could desire. Mary was distinguished for qualities of character which led the persecuted reformers to hope that, though she might not be able to alter the dispositions of their enemies, she would at least temper or restrain their violence.\* They were

\* Gerdes, t. iii., p. 74. Mary was so great a lover of learning, that Erasmus observed respecting her, that the course of human affairs was changed, for that the monks having cast aside learning, women had undertaken to protect it. To her he dedicated his little treatise on "Widowhood," which met with a most favourable reception, and thereby afforded him another occasion to speak in the highest terms of her piety and love of truth. "*Domini benignitas tuam pietatem semper in majus provchere dignabitur, ac pro tristibus læta reponere. Interdum adversis vel purgat, vel exercet nos: sed ille novit amara, uberiore consolationis suæ dulcedine temperare.*"—Lib. XXVI., Ep. 46.



not mistaken. This accomplished and enlightened woman evinced a respect for the general interests of learning which could not be forwarded without checking, from the very first, the rampant spirit of bigotry. Nor did she stop here. Her brother found himself appealed to in language the most persuasive against the barbarous instigations of other councillors. So urgent was she in her efforts to effect a change in his policy towards the Belgians, that her proceedings attracted the notice of Paul III.; and, in giving instructions to his legate, he exhorted him especially to warn the Emperor respecting the dangerous conduct of his sister.\*

But notwithstanding the benevolent attempts made by Mary of Hungary, the work of persecution was carried on with fearful success. This may be accounted for by the circumstance, that the laws against heresy remained unchanged, and that to propose any alteration in decrees of a nature so conformable to the general policy of rulers in that age, would have been an undertaking for which neither the power nor, perhaps, the genius of Mary was sufficient. Her aim could scarcely stretch farther than the introduction of a milder temper in the administration of the laws; the softening of individual hardship; and the suppression of that wantonness of cruelty which, even under the most barbarous system, will always contrive to revel in excess.

And even thus far she seems to have been but seldom able to go; for as she ruled the Netherlands just twenty-five years, it was chiefly during her time that that fearful number of sufferers before named must have been gathered together. Instances also are on record in which we see the untamed power of cruelty triumphant over every consideration, or influence, that could have sprung from exalted mercy. In the year 1532, a whole

\* The Pope's nuncio was directed, among other things, to complain to the Emperor, that his sister secretly favoured the Lutherans; that when the Catholic League was about to be formed, she had prevented the Elector of Treves from entering it, and had thereby hindered the design; that she had prevented the Bishop of Lavour, ambassador of France, from passing into Germany, to deliberate with the King of the Romans, and the legate of his Holiness, on the affairs of religion; but that the Pope attributed these things, not to any bad disposition on the part of the Queen, but to the evil counsels of her ministers.—Paul Sarpi., *Hist. Con. Tri.*, lib. I., sec. 61.

family, consisting of the father and mother, and two married daughters, each accompanied by her husband, perished at the same moment in the flames. The spirit in which these people met their sufferings affords a strong indication that they were strengthened by the true bread of life. Undaunted by the scene before them, they walked towards the piles on which they were to die, singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving, as feeling that the hour of their redemption was drawing nigh. These expressions of joyous faith were only stopped by the gathering flames which could not put an end to their prayers till they could end life also.

Examples of this nature have ever been found to act in a manner directly contrary to what was expected by the persecutors. The sublime resignation of the Christian household which thus rejoiced in becoming a sacrifice to God, sunk deeply into the hearts of the people. Many were softened by such a sermon whom no other address could reach : many were strengthened who had remained weak under every other application of truth : and many to whom the path of salvation had hitherto been hid in darkness, caught the first glimpse of it in the light which that offering sent forth.

About three years after this, Tindal having performed a work of inestimable value to the Church of Christ, was found ready to take his place in the noble army of martyrs. He had been allowed to enjoy in the Netherlands a secure retreat as long as security was needful for the success of the labours which he had so faithfully undertaken. For this he was probably indebted to the temporary and partial protection awarded to the reformers by Mary of Hungary ; and it is not unlikely, that he might have continued safe still longer, had it not been for his enemies in England, who pointing him out to the theologians of Louvain, rendered his further escape impossible. The reformers of Belgium must have derived great advantage from his scriptural teaching, and it was doubtlessly a subject of grief to those who had imbibed the spirit of the gospel, that the authority of such men was not more recognized among them. Anabaptism had begun to spread its deteriorating influence

abroad; and vast numbers of those who, convinced of their perishing condition, and of the inadequacy of the means hitherto offered for their recovery, looked anxiously around for help, fell at once into the snare spread by ignorance and fanaticism.\* The means and opportunities of faithful teachers of the gospel are almost always less than those possessed, or seized upon, by bold pretenders to the office. Legitimate methods, in any case, are fewer than those which may be invented by men who own no law in their proceedings, and forget all other relations but the one between themselves and their object. It is no wonder, therefore, that, at a time when truth was exposed to the severest persecution, and when sincere and intelligent students of Scripture were few, and had little opportunity of conferring with each other, an error combining in itself the qualities of great ardour and subtlety, should spread more rapidly, and gain more converts than the truth itself.

While sufficient cause for sorrow existed in the circumstance, that error was diffused to the great injury of the gospel, there was also this attendant evil, that a pretence was furnished for involving hundreds in ruin who might otherwise have passed unnoticed; while others who could not have escaped, and who had scarcely a wish to hide themselves, had things laid to their charge which they had never done, but which served for the moment to deprive their sufferings of the exemplary force attending a well-recognized sacrifice in defence of the pure gospel. It is, indeed, almost impossible for the historian now to determine, in what instances the bewildering spirit of fanaticism brought the victim bound to undergo the fiery lash of persecution;

\* "The first Anabaptists, as far as I can gather from their own writings, that were put to death for their persuasions in Holland, during the reign of Popery, were John Wadon, and two of his fraternity, of Waterlandt; and all these three were, with a slow fire, rather roasted than burnt to death, at the Hague, in the year 1527."—Brandt., vol. i., p. 57.

"Neither, it seems, ought we to be too ready in condemning the Anabaptists as uniformly guilty of some heavy offence against true religion. Erasmus has some strong expressions on this subject: '*Anabaptistæ, tametsi magno sunt ubique numero, tamen nusquam obtinuerunt ecclesiam. Hi vitæ innocentia præ cæteris commendantur, sed a reliquis quoque sectis opprimuntur, non solum ab orthodoxis.*'"—Gras., lib. XIX., Ep. 33.



or in what proportion the sufferers stood calm and collected, inspired only by the free spirit of holiness, to receive their meed of sanctified affliction.

But notwithstanding this discouraging feature in the early records of the Reformation in the Netherlands, there is sufficient to show that a genuine change was being produced in the minds of many men over whom a rude enthusiasm could exercise no control. Erasmus has borne testimony to the earnest and enlightened piety of some of those with whom he was in close and frequent conversation; and in other cases the incidental mention of some few words spoken by those about to suffer, affords an index to the real state of their minds. In the year 1540, two men and two women were brought before the tribunal at Louvain. The former were condemned to be burnt, and the latter to be buried alive. One of the women was questioned at the close of the examination concerning the invocation of saints. She replied in the words of her great Master, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." This answer aroused in her judges a storm of indignation; and they asked her how she, so wretched and base a sinner, would appear before the judgment-seat of God; when she would even tremble to meet the face of a mere human being? This question was urged by the further inquiry. "If you desired to obtain the mercy of his imperial majesty, when accused of some offence, would you not seek the favour of his ministers before you appealed to him? Would you not try to make them your friends as the surest means of procuring the grace for which you prayed?" To these questions the heroic woman replied: "Suppose that the Emperor himself, beholding my sad case from a window, should call me to him, saying, 'Come hither, wretched woman, for I myself am present, and I am prepared to render you whatever assistance may be needful.' Tell me now, my judges, I beseech you, what ought I in such a case to do? Should I begin to seek for some of the courtiers to act as my intercessors? By no means! but obeying the command of the Emperor,

I ought to go to him, asking and receiving from his own hands that which was necessary to my deliverance." The inference from this answer was too plain to be endured by the doctors of Louvain; and the four confessors being hurried away, the men were consigned to the flames, and the two women to the grave which yawned to receive their yet breathing forms.\*

Among those who took the most active part in carrying on the work of the Reformation at this time, was John a Lasco, a Polish nobleman, whose sober-minded zeal appears to have contributed greatly, not only to the diffusion of the truth through the provinces where he sojourned, but to the suppression of many of the evils attendant upon the less well-tempered fervour of his cotemporaries. He was indebted for the learning which he possessed to the universities of Germany; after studying in which, he took up his abode at Basil, where he became acquainted with Zuingle, and several of the most distinguished men of the age. On his return to Poland, he obtained the regard and honours to which both his rank and great abilities richly entitled him. But he could not forget the sentiments implanted in his mind by the pure lessons of evangelical truth. The solicitations of ambition failed to impress him, and the means which he enjoyed for advancing himself in the world seemed too precious, too much the gift of heaven, to be wasted upon any project of self-aggrandizement. "God," said he, in writing to one of his friends, after a sharp combat with the temptations of life, "has restored me to myself; and has wonderfully delivered me from the midst of Pharisaism, to bring me to the knowledge of himself." On being nominated to a bishopric by the

\* Gerdes, t. iii, p. 144.—The mode in which this burial alive was conducted is thus described in an account of the martyrdom of a man and his wife in 1545: the former having recanted, "he was only beheaded;" while the latter was led to her more terrible punishment. "They put her into a coffin without a cover, the length and breadth of which was scarce equal to those dimensions of her body. That this coffin might be well closed at top, there were three iron bars thrust through it, one of which lay across her breast, another somewhat lower, and the third her legs. At the upper end of the coffin, near her head, there was a hole made, through which one end of a rope passed, the other being about her neck; and when the earth was thrown upon her body, whilst it lay thus in the coffin upon the scaffold, the executioner stood below and pulled the said rope."—Brandt., vol. i., p. 84.

King of Poland, he honestly declared to the monarch the reasons which prevented him from accepting the proffered dignity. It is said that the King received his reply with marked kindness, and gave him many letters of recommendation, to aid him in accomplishing his design of making a journey of inquiry through the principal states of Europe. Having taken up his abode for some time at Mentz, he repaired to Louvain, where he married, and thence brought upon himself the hatred of those who deemed that he had thereby forfeited every title to wisdom and sanctity. He next visited Emden, where his learning and piety were rendered so conspicuous by his labours among the people, that he was at length constrained to undertake the general superintendence of the churches in the province.

The state of the Reformation in Emden was marked, at this period, by most of the features attending want of discipline, and regularity in the supply of instruction.\* Some of the old superstitious practices of the Roman Church were intermingled with others drawn from the fanatical suggestions of leaders of the Anabaptists. Against both these evils John a Lasco strove with all the force of a sedate and sanctified mind. Happily for the people over whom he was placed, the measures which he took were crowned with success. In a short time scarcely an image was any where to be seen: the ceremonies which had occupied the minds of the weak, and satisfied the consciences of the reprobate, ceased to engage attention: the arts whereby the fraudulent had practised on the imaginations of the multitude were exposed to the broad day-light of common sense; and fanaticism of every kind was obliged to submit to Scripture as the authorized test of all pretensions what-

\* "The true Church is continually exposed to the machinations of its infernal and perfidious enemy, Satan. This, if ever proved by experience, was made manifest at the Reformation. Among the tares which the adversary sowed with so large a hand in the field of the Lord, the sacramental controversy held not the last place. Wonderful that the enemy should have discovered that by that means he might injure the cause of the gospel when otherwise victorious. The churches of this district were sufficiently disturbed by these storms; which had so increased in the time of Lascus that, domestic strifes having arisen, the affair fast tended to a most miserable schism."—*Bertrami Pererga, Hist. Lit.*, p. 135.



ever. Nor did his success terminate with repressing error and superstition. He succeeded in supplying their place by pure doctrine, and rites eminently calculated to aid the spirit of true devotion; so that the name of John a Lasco is properly deserving of a place among the most distinguished in the annals of the Reformation.

It does not appear that this excellent man united himself formally to any of the parties of the day, but he firmly embraced the truth as exhibited in the gospel. In speaking of the opinions which chiefly engaged attention at this period, he observed, that there were two points on which he and those associated with him were most loudly condemned. The first of these referred to the nature of ministerial authority, "and we are blamed," says he, "because we do not ascribe the work of God himself to the work of the minister." The other pertained to the great controversy respecting the real presence, which, he observed, "we cannot determine to acknowledge." "If we could assent to these," he adds, "we should be esteemed most sanctified, and thrice, and fourfold, evangelical and orthodox. . . . But with regard to the ministry, that we may not ascribe the work of God alone to the labour of the priest, let us remember that the apostle Paul warns us against such an error; for while he testifies that he travailed with the Galatians, and had begotten the Corinthians and Onesimus, in order that he might commend the efficacy of divine grace in his ministry, yet, lest he should seem to ascribe in any way the work of God to his own exertions, he carefully distinguishes between the work of the Lord, and the labour of his servant. Thus he attributes the external culture, the planting and watering, to the minister, in such a manner that we may understand how God is pleased to do these things for the salvation of the faithful, by the work of his servants, and how they are to be considered fellow-workers with Him. But the giving of increase, he makes to be so entirely the work of God, that he altogether excludes his ministers from any share in this; which he would not do, nor speak of them as nothing, in comparison

with him who gives the increase, if this in any wise depended upon the work of the ministry itself. Again, with regard to the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the elements, we justify ourselves for not believing this, on the ground, that it is at variance with the whole tenor of Scripture; with the analogy of faith; with the consent of the universal Church, and with the proper respect due to our Lord Jesus Christ."

The country about Groningen is represented as singularly favoured. It was exposed to less misery than the other provinces of the Netherlands, and though enjoying light, had not to pay for it by the blood of martyrs. No one, it is said, was put to death here till the time of the Duke of Alba. This calmer state of things might probably be owing to the influence of the nobility in the neighbourhood, and to the healthy condition of the principal monastery, at the head of which was a man of singular piety and moderation. By his encouragement, several professors of eminence were entertained there, and as they pursued a more profitable course of instruction than that hitherto adopted, the cause of religious liberty was thereby aided to a far greater extent than could be suspected by its enemies. Among the chief ornaments of this celebrated retreat, was Albert Hardenberg, whose extensive acquirements in literature were rendered of great practical value by his fluent eloquence. The purity of his life, and sincere love of the gospel, corresponded to these endowments, and the situation afterwards held, at his recommendation, by John a Lasco, was originally offered to him.

A circumstance occurred in the year 1543 which served further to show the watchfulness of the reformers, and their desire to secure for the people of every country a constant supply of intelligence. The Spaniards in Belgium and Germany had not remained passive spectators of the changes which were taking place. While many of them viewed with concentrated hate the efforts of strangers to oppose a system, to which they had willingly seen hundreds of their own countrymen barbarously sacrificed, some few among them eagerly listened to the first sound of the gospel, and drank in

every ray of light imparted by the rising spirit of intelligence, anxious about their own souls, but not forgetting the melancholy state of their paternal land. Dryander was a man of sufficient learning to be recommended by Melancthon to Archbishop Cranmer, as well fitted to be of use in some English academy. To this he added, that he had lived intimately with him for many years, and that he was not only endowed with great gifts of mind, but with the knowledge and the grace of God.

After having resided some time in the Netherlands, Dryander formed the design of translating the New Testament into Spanish. To this he was probably led by seeing the good effects attending the circulation of the Scriptures in Germany and England; and the esteem in which the name of Tindal was held by the reformers of Belgium as well as those of his own country. Having finished the translation, he deemed it advisable to lay it before the doctors of Louvain, that they might examine it, and carefully compare it with the original; after which he proposed to print it for general circulation among his people. As might have been expected, strong objections were at once urged against the proposals of Dryander. The theologians reminded him, in the first place, that they were ignorant of the Spanish language; and if this was honestly spoken, it cannot but create some surprise, that the reformer should have allowed his zeal so far to overstep his prudence, or rather his common sense, as to induce him to lay a translation before persons who were ignorant of the language, and to entreat them to enter into a minute examination of its merits, when they were not even acquainted with the vocabulary of the tongue into which it had been rendered. It is difficult to believe that so learned and enlightened a man as Dryander could have been guilty of such a folly; but the only conjecture we can form, if such were not the case, throws suspicion on the common fairness of the doctors of Louvain. Supposing that the reformer was not wholly blind, he must have known, that his expressed desire to submit his translation to their examination was mere hypocrisy, if there were not ample reason to believe that



they were sufficiently well acquainted with the Spanish language. But hypocrisy can scarcely be ascribed to a man who was willing to lay down his life for the truth; nor can we reasonably suppose that he was ignorant of the true state of the case. He knew, it is most probable, that the doctors of Louvain were sufficiently well acquainted with the language to form an estimate of the merits of the translation; but he did not know, that they would excuse themselves from the task of considering the subject, on the plea, that they did not know the language as well, or as critically, as a native.\*

This objection, however, against entering into the critical review of the translation, was the least formidable obstacle to the wishes of Dryander. The learned theologians remarked, in the second place, that they did not think the people of Spain had any thing to do with a translation of the Scriptures, which might only tend to the encouragement of heresies in that country, as the reading of the Bible had done in so many other lands, and especially in Belgium. They added, that the circulation of the Scriptures among the common people, who could do very well without the Bible, had rendered them rebellious against the Church; and that it would be well if all translations were destroyed, for that then mankind might be expected to return obediently to the rule of the apostolic see. But at present, they confessed, no order had been issued by the Emperor to prohibit the circulation of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. Though they would not favour, therefore, the design of Dryander, they would not attempt to hinder his proceedings. As this left him free to take his own course, he next put his version into the hands of some friends who were known to possess an equally accurate knowledge of Greek and Spanish. Encouraged by the result of their diligent examination of the work, he had it

\* Gerdes, t. iii. p. 165. Dryander was the classical appellation given him according to the common custom of translating the name; which in this case was Enzinas, from the Spanish word signifying a species of oak. The brother of Dryander, or Enzinas, died a martyr at Rome, in 1546. Camerarius speaks of him in these terms: "*Ex Hispania habuit Philippus Melancthon secum virum gravem admodum constantemque et fortem in iis asserendis defendendisque, quæ vera atque recta esse discendo comperisset.*"—*Vita Melancthon.*, p. 332.

printed at Antwerp, and, prefixing a dedication to the Emperor, sent it into the world with the title, "The New Testament, or New Covenant, of our only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This title created an objection long before the text could be submitted to inquiry. It was said to savour of Lutheranism, and Dryander was accused of having prostituted the sacredness of Scripture in order to make room for error. That what was of little importance might not injure the efficacy of the design altogether, the translator readily altered the title, and left out the word "Covenant," trusting that he had thereby fully obviated all objections of a minor kind. But he had calculated wrong; a further revision was necessary. The words "only Saviour" still remained in the title, and it was now strenuously urged by another monk, that heresy and Lutheranism were concealed under this exclusive title of Jesus Christ.

At length the Emperor arrived at Brussels, and Dryander hastened to present him with a copy of his book. Charles received the offering with much kindness, and assured the translator that he would do all in his power to promote his pious designs. Comforted beyond measure by this gracious reception, Dryander returned to Antwerp, and trusted that he had performed a work which might greatly tend to the religious advancement of his countrymen. But scarcely had he left the palace when the Emperor delivered the book to his confessor. This was to expose both the design and its author to almost unavoidable ruin. The monk immediately suggested reasons which obliged the Emperor to pause in the fulfilment of his promise. Dryander waited for some time in patience, attributing the delay respecting his book to the ordinary difficulties attending such an undertaking in the hands of princes. On being informed, however, that the confessor alone had created the obstacle which prevented the success of his wishes, he returned to Brussels, and accused the monk to his face of having laboured to hinder the circulation of God's Word. This accusation was repulsed with no outbreak of indignation, but by a calm and gentle strain of remark, which would have induced men, less earnest and intel-

ligent than the reformers, to imagine that the knowledge of Scripture would really be injurious to the generality of mankind. But Dryander now saw too clearly the fate which he had to expect. The monk, unable to convince him of error in anxiously wishing to diffuse the purest of all truths, by the surest of all methods, represented him to the Emperor as an enemy to religion, and as deserving condign punishment. This he further confirmed, by alleging that he was the friend of the heretical Melancthon, and had praised him for his learning and piety,—an offence scarcely less pardonable than that, of having circulated a translation of Luther's Treatises on Christian Liberty and Free-will.

Charles V. was far too ready to listen to representations of this kind, to take upon himself the task of inquiring into their truth, or of opposing his imperial rectitude to the prejudiced and unjust proceedings of his ministers. Instead, therefore, of sending Dryander a license, he authorized his committal to prison, and the zealous reformer was accordingly seized by the officers of justice, and thrown into a dungeon. The minutest circumstances were alleged in proof of his meriting this treatment. He had been, like most of those who were anxious to remove the errors of superstition, long engaged in advocating the doctrine of justification by faith. In the printing of his translation, he had allowed the printer to set up these words, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law," in larger letters than the rest of the text. This, it was said, afforded an unanswerable proof of his Lutheranism.\*

But, as in other cases, the imprisonment of Dryander awakened feelings not much less dangerous to the safety of a corrupt party, than the diffusion of intelligence. A number of persons, to the amount of near four hundred, hastened to express their sympathy with his sorrows, and to offer him whatever aid it was in their power to bestow. Loving the gospel themselves; comforted by the knowledge of its heavenly promises; guided by its precepts, they could not fail to be deeply interested in any

\* Gerdes, t. iii., p. 169.



attempt which proposed to make the same blessings universal. The persecution of the man who had been among the few whose united abilities and courage enabled them to undertake such a design, was eminently calculated to rouse indignation in every generous mind. It was the highest cause of humanity and holiness in which he had engaged; and when the only meed of such an undertaking was to be dragged, like a common felon, to the dungeon, it could not but seem to the thinking part of the world, that the hour was nigh at hand when truth must assert its rights, or leave mankind to the final destiny of darkness. Dryander found in the consolations of Christian friendship the best balm for his sorrows. Tidings were brought him from different quarters of the country, that the gospel was every day gaining stronger hold on the attention of the people; and that, notwithstanding the severity of the persecutions raging in several provinces, it had opened fresh furrows even in the most unpromising places, and given to many a wilderness the odour of the garden of the Lord. It was not till after fifteen months that he obtained his liberation; and, as he immediately left the Netherlands, there seems reason to believe that it was necessary to his safety that he should seek some other abode.

Louvain was the very focus of zeal and tyranny. In the year in which Dryander attempted to circulate his translation of the New Testament, between twenty and thirty persons were put to death in that city and neighbourhood. The means employed to secure the victims indicated a fierce and relentless barbarity. Images of the most active of the reformers were placed at the gates of the town, and the people were instructed to make themselves familiar with their appearance, that they might be able to seize the offenders wherever they should meet them.\* Franciscus Junius, a distinguished theologian and moralist, was exposed to the persecution of this period. He had written a work which gave so much offence to the champions of the Church, that it was proclaimed at Brussels, that whosoever knew the author of

\* Brandt., vol. i., p. 80.

that book, and would bring him before the magistrate, should receive a reward of three or four hundred florins. This speedily awakened the ingenuity of the needy. A painter joined himself to the little society of reformers at Antwerp, where Junius was residing; and, having eyed him narrowly, was enabled to take a likeness of him sufficiently accurate to mark him out to the officers of justice, who would have effected his apprehension, had not Divine Providence ordered that he should be absent when the magistrate arrived with his attendants.

The state of mind under which some of the enemies of the gospel laboured, presents a melancholy proof of the truth, that they were resisting the blessed influences of divine grace, and were thereby consigning themselves to hopeless despair. That the larger number of those who engage in warfare with the principles of a spiritual religion, exhibit no sign of remorse, endure no apparent torments, manifest no change of feeling even to the last, is but a bad proof that they really escape the consequences proper to a violation of truth and justice, and the dictates of the Spirit. But reason tells us to dread to encounter danger under which not one in a thousand may fall; and if we see that the gloomy fiend of persecution does, in some instances, turn upon its allies, and fill their hearts with its venom, till the blackness of despair involves them in its folds, then persecution will have a worse terror for those whom it urges forward in its work than it can ever have for the victims whom it immolates, or crushes. Mention is made in the annals of this period, of three of the theologians of Louvain who died in the deepest misery, the consequence of that wretched system which gave birth at once to the monstrous inventions of scholasticism, and the fierce, un-pitying zeal that could not be satisfied, till it dried up every fountain of hope or consolation that the gospel would leave open for the comfort of fainting souls.

Latomus, one of the most celebrated divines of Louvain, fell a victim to his own fearful visions of the fate which might attend him hereafter. From the moment that his mind began to exhibit proofs of its disturbed condition, he perpetually exclaimed that he was condemned,

and rejected, by God, and that there was no hope of salvation for him, seeing that he had rejected the truth.\* Another theologian of the same school being seized with a mortal malady, expressed in similar terms his horrible conviction, "that wickedly as he had lived, he should not be able to bear the judgment of God, but must perish without mercy under the weight of his offences." The end of Arnold Bomelius, equally distinguished at Louvain, is spoken of as illustrating the same melancholy truth. Bomelius was too ingenuous, it appears, to close his eyes to the gospel, till he had been long exposed to the subtle processes of his sophistical instructors. He then embraced the whole system of scholastic theology, and with this would have remained contented, had he needed nothing more than means and machinery for exercising the powers of his active intellect. But he was not to be thus satisfied. His heart became oppressed with care. He needed the supports of divine grace, and they were not to be found in the system which he had embraced. Blind to the value of the pure, simple gospel, he plunged deeper into the stream of his own dark thoughts, and every hour carried him farther from the hope of salvation. He concealed not his misery. His melancholy exclamations filled the hearts of his companions

\* "At first he was well enough disposed to receive the truths of the Reformation; but changing on a sudden, he did all that was in his power to suppress them. He wrote against Erasmus, Luther, Œcolampadius and Tyndal. But one time ascending the pulpit at Brussels to preach before the Emperor, he was so daunted that he could not utter his words, to be understood, and the whole congregation fell a laughing at him. Hereupon he returned immediately to Louvain, and what with the shame of this accident, and reflecting upon what he had done against his conscience, he fell into despair. In his lessons, he often dropped expressions that he had fought against the truth; to smother which his own friends shut him up in his house, where he died despairing, crying out frequently, 'that he was damned; that he was rejected by God; that he could not hope for salvation or pardon, having presumptuously fought against God.'—Brandt, vol. i., p. 83. Gerdes, t. iii.

"I cannot conjecture," says Erasmus, "what has so suddenly changed his opinions."—Lib. VI., Ep. 2. Again: "A book has lately appeared from the pen of Latomus, a theologian of Louvain, in which he condemns languages not altogether, but so as to attribute as little worth to them as possible. I have said in my 'Method' that piety and spiritual-mindedness is a great part of theology. Latomus, opposing this, shows with many words, that a theologian and a pious man are not the same. I am afraid, after this, if they persevere in such an opinion, there may be some who will say, that a theologian and a sensible man are not the same."—Lib. VI., Ep. 8.



with grief, but they were as little acquainted as himself with the only sovereign remedy of such a sorrow. They followed him in his walks; endeavoured to soothe him by persuasions, and engaged him in their various discourse; but they could tell him nothing of the peace of Heaven; and to a mind absorbed in the idea of eternity, a host of constellations would appear of little worth, unless they could be made to throw light on the direct track of the soul. The unfortunate Arnold now formed the notion of self-destruction, and the momentary absence of his friends enabled him to effect his purpose. When half dead from the stroke of the knife, he was asked if he did not repent the deed. He replied by fiercely seizing another weapon from the girdle of one of his friends, and plunging it into his already bleeding bosom.

Such was the gloomy state of feeling that prevailed among many of those who were intimately mixed up with the most powerful section of the persecuting party. We have given the incidents as they are recorded in the annals of the period. It may be questioned whether similar circumstances might not have occurred under a very different system; or whether the system had any thing to do with the deplorable calamity which bowed down the broken-hearted men of whose fate we have made mention. Such doubts may be fairly started; nor do we think that it would be honest to charge any set of opinions, or any institution, with consequences of this kind, except in cases where the cause and effect are so closely joined, that no reasonable man could suspect that prejudice had any hand in bringing them together. But when incidents like those above related, press themselves strongly on our attention, it is almost impossible not to assign to them a certain degree of interest, if not of importance; nor ought we, perhaps, ever to shrink from the task of comparing such circumstances with the systems under which they may appear, some useful discovery being the almost necessary consequence of a fair comparison of the state of men's minds with the nature of the opinions which they profess.

The Duchy of Cleves enjoyed many advantages through the liberal policy of its prince. Evangelical

ministers were appointed in conformity with the wishes of the people, and the mass was abolished by a decree of the senate. That this was effected in opposition to the will of the Emperor is sufficiently proved by the events which daily occurred in the neighbouring provinces. At the very time when the gospel was openly preached and received at Cleves, the thankful hearers might almost see the flames in which their fellow-believers were expiring in the adjoining towns. Among those who suffered about this period, Maria à Beccum, and her sister-in-law Ursula, afforded a noble instance of the power of divine grace to give an indomitable courage to the weakest and the most timid. Maria à Beccum was a young lady of rank, and her firm attachment to the doctrines of the reformers indicates no ordinary force of mind. But while she was herself rejoicing in the truth, her mother remained devoted to the severest forms of the established system.\* Natural affection appears to have lost its hold in the disputes which thence arose; and Maria was obliged to seek refuge in the house of her brother. Her flight was known; and in the middle of the night a magistrate, with several attendants, arrived to apprehend her. She immediately rose, and, surrendering herself to the officers, asked Ursula, her brother's wife, if she would accompany her. The generous-minded woman replied, that she needed but the consent of her husband to attend her whithersoever she might be led. The permission being granted, they were conveyed to Deventer; the mother of Maria having in vain sought her, in the hope of persuading her to recant. Many cruel insults were heaped upon them in their journey, and in the prison. When questioned concerning their faith, they answered according to the simple statements of the gospel itself. This was sufficient to secure their condemnation, and they were ordered to be burnt alive. Undisturbed by the fear of death, they calmly approached the scene of suffering, alternately singing psalms, and exhorting the weeping crowds not to lament their fate; "for we are about to die," said they, "not as evil-doers, but as Christians." When arrived at the

\* Gerdes, t. iii., p. 180.

pile, they affectionately kissed each other, and mingling their prayers offered up a petition, "that God might be pleased to pardon and enlighten their judges, who, sunk in darkness and superstition, knew not what they did." Maria then exhorted them to refrain from shedding any more innocent blood; and hearing the executioner raging because the chain would not answer his purpose, she prayed him not to let any thing which concerned her poor body provoke him to blaspheme the name of God. When one of the clergy present offered to turn Ursula from the melancholy spectacle of her expiring companion, she resisted, observing that she wished to see the departure of her sister into that glory to which she hoped also to attain. On being asked whether, having beheld the fate of Maria, she would not now consent to retract, she firmly replied in the negative, and all persuasions being found unavailing, the executioners led her to the pile. Having directed one of her town's people, who by chance stood near, to deliver her affectionate farewells to her husband, and her entreaties that he would continue to serve that God to whom she was now about to be offered up in sacrifice, she began the Lord's Prayer, and having uttered the words "Who art in heaven," the parish priest observed, "Yes, there indeed He is found;" on which she added, "Yes; and because I seek Him there, and not in a piece of corruptible bread, I am to be put to death." On ascending the pile, her foot slipped, and as this was regarded as a sign of failing courage, the judge exclaimed, "Hold off! she is preparing to recant." "No!" she immediately exclaimed, "this weak frame trembled, but think not that I can ever desert Christ."\*

\* The year 1544 was fruitful in martyrdoms, but the sufferers were chiefly Anabaptists, a whole assembly of which, it is said, were betrayed at Rotterdam. All that could not make their escape were put to death; the men being beheaded, and the women flung into a boat, and then driven under the ice. A disciple of David George, at Deventer, suffered about the same time with so much firmness, that the bystanders could not deny him the praise of a most holy devotion to the truth. Having been submitted four or five times to the rack, he was at length condemned to die. At his trial, he said that David George had taught him nothing but good; namely, the Word of God; and that he had confirmed to him all his doctrines from the divine writings, and taught him how to slay the old man, with its evil desires. When on the scaffold, he said, "O God, if it were but possible that I might



Whilst these melancholy proofs were daily given of the power of the Church to overthrow every principle of law and justice, the Emperor made himself a party to the worst instances of cruelty, by enabling the persecutors to colour their proceedings with a show of legitimate authority. In the month of March 1545, an edict was published, setting forth, that the sacrifice of the mass had been instituted by Christ, and that it was profitable as well for the dead as for the living; that prayers ought to be made to the saints, as our advocates and intercessors with Christ; and that the substance of the bread and wine is changed in consecration. To this it was added, that while it is lawful for priests alone to perform the service of consecration, so to them only pertains the whole of the Lord's Supper: that monastic vows ought to be observed; that the Holy Spirit is conferred by confirmation, unction, and the sacraments; that souls are liberated from purgatory by prayer, fasting, and good works; that the laws of the Church concerning fasting, and choice of meats, are binding on the conscience; that there is one supreme ruler and pontiff of the Church, who claims by divine right the obedience of all its members; that many things ought to be received and believed which are not found in Scripture; that the fires of purgatory are remitted in virtue of pontifical indulgences; that wicked priests consecrate the body of the Lord, if they intend to do it; that all mortal sins are to be confessed to the priest, and that he is to bestow sacramental absolution; that man has free-will, whereby he is able to act well or ill, and to rise from sin through penitence; that remission of sins is to be acquired not by faith alone, but by charity and true penitence; that the Church, and councils lawfully assembled, cannot err, and that, therefore, they are to be obeyed; and that the judgment, and interpretation of Scripture, in case of controversy, pertain to the Church.

It is not to be denied that, in seasons of dispute and

rise immediately after this death, and die once again for this truth of the God of heaven! thou knowest, O Lord, that I would do it with joy and pleasure."—Brandt., vol. i., p. 81.

agitation, it is equally the duty and interest of a church to make known its doctrines, and the principles upon which it has founded its government. But in the present case, the proclamation was as a net spread to entangle virtuous and ingenuous minds in the meshes of subtle controversy. It was not issued to instruct, or to warn, but to fasten guilt upon innumerable victims who, innocent of any crime, were yet made to appear guilty of as many offences against the State as against the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church. The most cursory view of its contents is sufficient to convince us, that it was not directed against the sects who were to be found sheltering themselves under the pretence of reform, while in reality committing odious vices, but that it was aimed at true preachers of the gospel. That there were offences committed at this period for which religion was made chargeable, history affords too many melancholy proofs; but the question should have been, whether the opinions alluded to in the proclamation had been found connected with insubordination, profligacy or treason. It is never, however, for the interest of persecution to discriminate. When the mere result of a misguided conscience, it is a fierce extravagance, fed by viewing every thing through a distorted medium; by enlarging every thing, misplacing every thing; till the slightest difference in opinion has become the violation of a sacred rule; and the return to simple truth and reason, the overthrow of a church. Hence persecutors have rarely seemed anxious to find out actual offenders against holiness. They needed nothing so real and substantial as positive licentiousness. Their sight was sufficiently keen to observe the minutest distinctions between one class of opinions and another; and as it was in the difference between the two, and not in the evil of either, that they loved to discover the giant form of guilt, declared vice belonged not so plainly to their jurisdiction, which they rather desired to extend over the province of thought, and, like a second conscience, to render opposition to their dictates a high offence against the first laws of religion.

The state of Belgium has thus far presented but

little to encourage the belief, that the Reformation was advancing in that country with success proportioned to the desires of its earnest friends. A comprehensive and well-organized system was continually employed to counteract its spiritual influence; and the yawning grave, the scaffold, or the burning pile, swallowed up, or mowed down, whole ranks of its advocates. The want of organization on the side of the latter prevented their making any effectual inroads on the superstition of the people at large; and their defenceless position rendered them equally helpless when they were basely confounded with daring bands of the worst order of Anabaptists, or with the still more infamous Libertines. These last-named sectaries appear to have exceeded all others in the reprobate character of their lives and opinions. "With them," said a contemporary writer, "Christ is Satan, and Satan Christ, vice virtue, and virtue vice; for, according to their notion, there is no sin, except as it exists in the opinion of those who think they sin. The true fear of God, and conscience imbued therewith, they regard as hell itself; as the kingdom of the furies; and paradise, and a happy life, is with them a conscience utterly insensible to divine justice. Such being the foundation of their principles, they interpret Scripture so as to make it appear agreeable to their impious assertions, and thus deceive the unwary to their destruction." Against these Calvin wrote with all the vigour of his stern and mighty mind; and the affectionate Melancthon is said to have exclaimed, in reference to the disorders of Belgium, increased as they were by these wretched fanatics, "Alas! for Belgium, with its horrible bath of blood, and its petulant spirits."\*

\* Gerdes, t. iii, p. 190.



## CHAP. X.

## THE REFORMATION IN SWEDEN AND DENMARK.

IN turning from the Netherlands to watch the progress of the Reformation in the more northern provinces of Europe, we find ourselves breathing a freer air, and the prospect shines with a steadier light than any portion of that which we have last contemplated. The people of Sweden, and the neighbouring domains, were not in a position for exercising any important influence in the great struggle now being carried on. Their advance in knowledge, therefore, makes a less conspicuous feature in the grand historical picture of the sixteenth century. But they were a part of the family of God; a part of the household for the protection and illumination of which, he was now pleased to pour down, with such singular mercy, the light of his heavenly Spirit. Viewed in this respect only, it is cheering to the believer to behold the diffusion of the gospel in these lands, and to hear of the numerous conversions which followed the first simple preaching of Jesus Christ, as the way, the truth, and the life. But it is also further interesting to trace the progress of the Reformation in this part of the world, in reference to its general bearing on the state of the all-important question in other quarters of Europe. Every nation, nay every province, or city, brought to acknowledge the authority of Scripture above the mere traditions of the Church, added tenfold strength to the cause of the Reformation. A single voice has the force of thunder when it is raised in witness to the truth amid a people already roused to attention. And this was the case at the commencement of the great change during which so many countries recovered themselves from the awful paralysis, or the fearful phrenzy of superstition.

Sweden stands foremost in the ranks of the northern nations that awakened at the call of the Reformation.

In no instance has the interference of Divine Providence been more manifest than in the case of this country. Its connexion with Denmark had deprived it of independence, and dried up every source of national wealth and glory; and the great ally of the tyrant state had been the Church of Rome.\* The Archbishop of Upsal reigned supreme over the consciences of the people, and his vast revenues enabled him to confirm his power so as to render it independent of holiness in himself or his clergy. In a nation so circumstanced, the emissaries of Leo X. had ample opportunities for exercising their gainful operations. The preaching of indulgences was accordingly carried on with equal zeal and boldness by the papal legate; and the political rivalries and agitations of the period seemed, at first, to give fresh vigour to the machinery under his control. But a signal overthrow of the whole of this complicated system of tyranny was at hand. The fierce despotism of Christiern II. needed all the help it could derive from Rome, and the cause of the priesthood stood in corresponding need of the aid of Denmark.† Never had the luxury of the clergy pressed more heavily on the people than it did now in Sweden. This was well understood by the patriotic part of the native nobility; and just in proportion as the higher clergy found it necessary to court the protection of the Danish monarch, the Swedes regarded it as equally their policy and duty to resist their aggressions, and endeavour to abridge their power. When the attempts of the papal ministers still further irritated the nation, and created the dread of utter ruin, as the unavoidable consequence of ecclesiastical oppression, the aspect of popular indignation became so threatening that Christiern II. read in its deeply marked characters the prophecy of approaching vengeance.

To anticipate and prevent the evil which he had so

\* Baazii Inventarium Eccles. Sueo-Goth. Lincop. 1642. Lib. II., c. 1, p. 150.

† Christiern was not at first opposed to the project of a reformation. Luther says that he had intimated to his university, that he did not wish the reformer's writings to be condemned (Epis. 219); and the apologists of the monarch have attributed his crimes and errors to the evil counsels of the Pope and the bishops.—Seckendorf, Com. Luth., lib. I. sec. cx., p. 5.

much reason to apprehend, this blind barbarian had recourse to an expedient fitted only to the most wretched period of heathen darkness. Having apprehended the principal men of the nation, under the pretence that they had unlawfully resisted the orders of the Pope, he directed them to be executed, and in this manner slew nearly six hundred of the most enlightened leaders of the people. If discontent prevailed before, hate and an inextinguishable thirst for revenge, were now the predominant feelings of the nation. Divine justice ordered that the tyrant should not go unpunished. The very means which he had employed to secure his power, served to effect his ruin. Among those who perished in the massacre of the nobles, was the father of Gustavus Vasa, and the youthful hero only saved himself from death, or perpetual bondage, by a hasty flight. But that flight brought him into close communication with the bold peasantry of his country, and at the head of an army drawn from the mines and forests of Dalecarlia, he delivered his native land from as miserable a state of bondage as had ever been endured by a European nation.\*

The triumph of Gustavus Vasa was not a victory over the government of Denmark merely. It was the humiliation of that overgrown ecclesiastical power through which the designs of the hostile court had been carried into effect. The Archbishop of Upsal was as great an enemy to his country as the King of Denmark; and so long as the Church nurtured princely bishops, and furnished them with the retinues of worldly potentates, at the expense of every thing necessary to the maintenance of religion itself, there could be little hope that it would ever take part with those right-minded men whose object it was to free the country from the despotism under which it groaned.

Scarcely had Gustavus been fairly seated on the throne, when he began to put in execution the designs which he had formed for the humbling of the clergy. This was rendered necessary by the obvious dangers of his situation. Every attempt made for the improvement

\* Baaz. Invent. Vertot, *Hist. des Revolutions de Suede*, t. i., p. 228.



of the country excited the enmity of that powerful body ; and it was manifest that they would never allow it to remain free, so long as by its servitude their dignities and revenues seemed likely to be protected from invasion. There is little reason to suppose that Gustavus had any higher regard for religion itself in his projected reforms than is usually found in rulers and statesmen. He wished simply to destroy a rival power, and one which common sense and justice denounced as inimical to the interests of his people. Had he been left to execute his plans, therefore, according to the mere dictates of policy, he would probably have done nothing more than deprive the obnoxious prelates of their rank, and confiscate their revenues. This would, in all likelihood, have been followed up by further deprivations, till the Church became too poor and weak either to alarm the government, or perform efficiently any service for the nation.

But happily in this, as in other cases, the merciful providence of God had not left a business of such importance in the hands of men. While the new monarch of Sweden was preparing his schemes for humbling the clergy by an act of power, some of his subjects were imbibing in Germany the pure evangelical light of truth, and were being nurtured into strength, that they might be fit to undertake the great work of diffusing through the length and breadth of a land, hitherto left to ignorance and demoralization, the full religion of Jesus Christ. The leaders in this blessed undertaking were two brothers, Olaus Petri, and Laurentius Petri, the sons of a smith of Orebro, the capital of the mining district of Nericia. Having received the rudiments of their education from the Carmelite monks of their native town, they were sent to Rome, where they continued sufficiently long to complete the studies considered necessary for their admission into the priesthood. Passing through Germany on their return home, the fame of the new University of Wittemberg attracted their notice, and impelled by a strong desire to take advantage of the valuable lectures of its professors, they

enrolled themselves on the list of its students. Of acute and ingenuous minds, it required but a short time to convince them of the erroneous nature of the system under which they had been brought up. They discovered that it was alike incompatible with the free pursuit of knowledge, and the profession of a religion received pure from heaven. The sound of the gospel, unmixed with human inventions, ungarbled by tradition, was new to their ears; but they at once perceived how inestimably precious that gospel would be to their countrymen as well as to themselves; and with what a blessing they would return to their father-land, if they might indeed believe themselves put in trust of that mighty boon of heavenly love and wisdom. Nor were they denied this noble gratification. By a remarkable accident, the ship in which they took their passage for Sweden was wrecked on the island of Gothland, where the brother of the papal legate was then preaching the value of indulgences with equal zeal and success. Olaus Petri\* at once took the station for which he seemed to have been raised up. The ignorant people were warned against the fatal deception to which they stood exposed; and instructed in the first truths of the gospel, they soon began to understand enough of the real nature of redemption to despise the arts which would have deprived them of the only means of safety. To give greater force to his efforts, Olaus applied to the Admiral Norby for support; and he had the happiness to find that distinguished chief fully prepared to render him the aid which he sought. The preacher of indulgences was now not only stopped in his career, but was obliged to refund his ill-acquired profits, and to leave the island.

Having made this successful commencement of his great design, Olaus proceeded to Strengness, the bishop of which see lent a not unwilling ear to his earnest and

\* There was some difference in the character of the two brothers: Laurence Petri was naturally timid, and discovered his opinions with much caution. He contented himself, therefore, with secretly circulating the books of Luther, and conversing with his private friends.--Vertot, *Hist. des Rev.*, t. i., p. 229.

powerful appeals. Such was his influence with the venerable prelate, that every day fresh opportunities were afforded him for diffusing the knowledge which he brought from Germany. Appointed to a dignified office in the diocese, he gathered around him the most promising of the younger clergy, and to them imparted his views and opinions with so much persuasive argument, that he brought many of them to co-operate with him in his labours, and to undertake the work of preaching a gospel hitherto known but by name. The agitated state of the country might, it is probable, aid the circulation of the new opinions, by exciting the minds of the people to general inquiry, and diminishing the vigilance of the bishops. But when Gustavus had freed the nation from the yoke of Denmark, and was preparing to limit the authority of the ruling prelates, the operations of Olaus assumed an importance in the eyes of the monarch, which secured to the reformer a kind of success scarcely to have been looked for had he been left to his own resources.

Gustavus was too wise a prince not to be sensible of the difficulties which must attend the reform of any church. The prejudices of a people left long uninstructed are rarely in favour of the truth; and the most faithful and diligent teacher of holiness will never calculate on the sudden conversion of a multitude to the cause of a pure faith.\* Roused and persuaded by successive appeals to their sense of justice, and instructed as to some of the more flagrant offences of those who have deceived them, they may be brought into a state of present hostility with their former pastors; but the process whereby they

\* The Swedes had been willing subjects to the sway of the Roman Church: "*Florebat egregie,*" says Maimbourg, "*religio Catholica in Svecia, cum schisma in Germania indulgentiarum occasione fieri inciperet. Adeo nemo offendeatur oblationibus ad fabricam S. Petri, ut et princeps tunc regni Steno, et magnates aulæ omnes magnifica dona legato Arcimbolde dederint, et prælatus iste plusquam decies centena florenorum millia ex Svecia exportaverit.*"—Sec. 57. The obstacles to the Reformation are acknowledged to have been many, and they evidently resulted, as in other cases, from the great difficulty of rousing a people, long accustomed to rites and ceremonies agreeable to a carnal nature, to the consideration of spiritual truths. The small number of orthodox preachers; the false representations studiously spread through the country by the monks, and the irregularities of the Anabaptists, all increased the obstacles with which the reformers had to contend.—Baazii Inventarium, lib. II., c. ii., p. 156.



were driven to seek freedom is not necessarily imbued with the qualities which soothe and enlighten as soon as it has done its work as a provocative. The Spirit of God may transform a sword into a ploughshare, but in the hands of men the weapon will remain what it always was. Gustavus, therefore, had some reason to fear that if he proceeded not with great caution, he might humble the clergy to create a power which kings have ever found more terrible than that of the Church, however ambitious or corrupt. Superstition may incapacitate the people from enriching the coffers of the state; it may rival the claims of loyalty, and speak a language neither fit for the ears of supreme authority, nor consistent with the majesty of the laws; but thrones remain unshaken by these things; and an occasional compromise of dignity, or the payment of a tribute, is all that is required to make the Church, in its haughtiest moods, the willing minister of the state. But a people excited to cast aside the usual restraints upon its passions, is not to be brought to terms till the institutions of ages may have perished under the whirlwind of its indignation. This was well understood by the King of Sweden, and, anxious as he was for reform, he determined, therefore, to take no step till he was well assured that the effect would not be to excite any organized commotion. The appearance of some of the wildest of the Anabaptists in different parts of the country tended still further to prove the wisdom of this policy. But, for the great blessing of the nation, Olaus Peter had acquired sufficient knowledge of the principles on which a reformation ought to be established, to enable him to direct the monarch by a route as safe as it was honourable. That Gustavus was willing to take him for his guide and counsellor reflects a higher glory on the sovereign's name than his greatest victories. Olaus was far advanced in experience when he was thus called to the counsels of the King. He had adopted all the important points of Luther's doctrines, and, like him, had deemed it right to throw off the restraints of the monastic vows, and marry. When he first preached before the King, he loudly declaimed against the superstitions of the Romish Church, and convinced him that nothing

less than a general reformation could restore to the country the light and security of a pure faith. Gustavus informed him why he dare not at first proclaim his assent openly to these bold truths; but the delay was brief, and Olaus was made preacher of the Cathedral of Stockholm, and Secretary of State.\*

The work was now fairly begun; and the impoverished state of the nation urged the King into measures which, though originating in mere political necessities, were made useful for the loftier purposes of spiritual improvement. By depriving the ambitious champions of the old regime of the means of carrying on the system to which they were indebted for their authority, a step was taken which could not be retraced, and the state and the Romish prelacy were for ever separated. The feeling of hostility introduced by these measures obliged Gustavus to hasten the completion of his designs, which would otherwise have been left to the slow development of successive seasons. A Christian spirit beholds with regret whatever immediately violates any individual right or privilege; and feels still greater sorrow when the consequence is a loss of charity. But it would be difficult to fix the charge of aggression on the religious leaders of the Reformation in any country. The movement attending their preaching, was favourable to the wishes of governments, which found the Church pressing too heavily on the resources of the nation. But it was only incidentally so. They depended not on the wealth of their associations, or their temporal power, for the success of their designs; and had the state never afforded them its countenance, there is no reason to believe that they would have shrunk from the execution of the task, which they believed imposed upon them by the Spirit and Providence of God. Princes would have done less harm by continuing to persecute than by favouring the

\* That the pious monarch, says the historian of the Swedish Church, might remove the chief difficulty in the way of reformation, he began by reforming his court, that by his own example, and that of his associates, in their daily conversation, religion might be encouraged among the people. Thus, *gratiâ Dei illuminatus*, he introduced not only Olaus Petri, but many other men of distinguished piety into his court, thereby providing himself, as well as the people, with a defence against the snares of the papists and heretical pravity.—Baazii Inventarium, lib. II., c. iii., p. 160.

reformers, had it followed, that the reformers were made responsible, by the protection which they received, for all the acts which their rulers covered with the pretensions of religion. It is evident that Gustavus Vasa, unmoved by any spiritual consideration, could have speedily adopted measures for appropriating some of the revenues of the Church to the improvement of his finances; and it is surely equally plain, that his adopting them subsequently to his discovery of purely religious, as well as political, reasons for so doing, ought not to throw the whole burden of the defence upon the former. That the acts of power exercised on the part of political rulers, and chiefly for political purposes, greatly aided in the end the cause of the gospel, is to be attributed to the mighty working of Him in whose hands every species of power, and every element of human thought, is an instrument of good.

Many of the prelates whom Gustavus obliged to give an account of their revenues, evinced a determination to resist his intentions to the utmost; and the consequence was their immediate deposition and expulsion from their dioceses. His first demand savoured so little of tyranny, that the slightest feeling of patriotism would have been sufficient to secure its being readily and gladly met. He asked for the tenth of a year's income, and that because the nation was on the point of ruin. Had he not been refused this reasonable request, the Church might have been preserved in its former state, with those slighter alterations only imperiously demanded by the change in government. But not content with defending the more important of their rights, the heads of the clergy resolved on opposing every attempt at improvement, and Olaus and his brother were cited to appear before the dignitaries of Upsal, and answer, as in judgment, for their conduct. Gustavus was at this time in some distant part of his kingdom, and his absence afforded the prelates an admirable opportunity for effecting their purpose. But the firmness of the two brothers defeated the project. Though threatened with the ban of the Church, they remained unmoved; and the sound policy of the monarch served still further to



prevent the consequences which might have been apprehended from the angry determination of the bishops. In a progress through his dominions, he won the affections of the people by his affable address, and convinced them, by his representations, of the injuries which they would suffer, unless some change were effected in the state of the Church. The power of the Romish clergy, mighty as it was, yielded to the influence of the monarch; but he had the good sense to suppress the display of any of those passions which were ready, on the other side, to convert his triumph into a new cause of disgust.

To afford both parties a fair opportunity of stating their wishes and opinions, he encouraged public disputations. In the year 1524, according to his express desire, Peter Galle, one of the canons of the Cathedral of Upsal, and professor of theology there, was appointed to meet Olaus, and discuss with him the topics which had so long engaged the attention of the divines of Germany.\* The two champions entered upon the dispute in the presence of the King and his council, and a numerous body of the most enlightened men of the country. By the first article proposed, it was asked, whether a religion, received and preserved by long use, could be abrogated, so that rites instituted by the Church might be done away? The professor replied, that the proposition consisted of two parts, of which the one regarded the defence of Scripture as expounded by the antient fathers; for as holy Scripture is difficult to be understood, and contains many obscure passages, according to the testimony of the apostle Peter,† no one should presume to understand it without an interpreter.‡ And there were antient interpreters, to whom were given singular powers for unfolding the meaning of the Divine Word, as both St. Peter and St. Paul state.§ He, there-

\* Baazii Inventarium, lib. II., c. iii., p. 160.—Vertot says, that Olaus appeared in the assembly with all the confidence afforded by the secret protection of the prince; and that the bishops refused to enter into the conference with him, under the pretext of their dignity, which rendered them his judges; perhaps, also, he adds, from the fear of committing themselves to so learned and eloquent a man.—T. i., p. 327.

† 2 Pet. iii.

‡ Acts, viii.

§ 1 Pet. i.; 1 Cor. xii.

fore, who denies that their opinion is derived from the Holy Spirit, is guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit, and holds not the true faith. The second part, he added, concerned the rites of the Church ; and he laid down this rule, that whatsoever rites or constitutions are not contrary to the written Word, if they be not apostolical, ought to be preserved. But many, he continued, were instituted by the apostles, which were not written;\* and all traditions and rites derived from them and from the primitive Church ought to be kept ; whence Augustine remarks, and the same is said in the Decretals, that the ecclesiastical constitutions which are not written in the Bible are a law to the people, and give information to the rude and ignorant.

Olaus replied to this, by observing, that he acknowledged that the interpretation of the holy fathers ought to be received when it was not contrary to the written Word, for in that case the authority of the fathers would avail nothing, while the truth of the Word of God itself is altogether infallible : that in those constitutions in which the fathers differed from Scripture, it was a duty to differ from them, otherwise there would be no difference between the Word of God and the decrees of the fathers : that it was plain, moreover, that the antient fathers had erred as men ; and to retain whatever they had said indiscriminately was to contradict the Word of God, which directs us to prove all things, to try the spirits, and to beware of false prophets ; all which admonitions would be vain, were the false opinions of the fathers not to be rejected. He also observed, that it was common for the Church to condemn the heterodox opinions of those who teach things contrary to the Divine Word, a truth frequently stated by Augustine, affirmed in the decrees of the pontiffs, and illustrated by numerous facts ; whence it may be concluded, that the truth of religion depends not on the interpretation of the fathers. “ Let us now examine,” he continues, “ the reasonings of my opponent, and we shall find that they do not reach the point at which he aims.

\* 1 Cor. vi. ; 3 Ep. John ; Acts, xvi., xvii.

The question is, whether the fathers and the antient doctors of the Church, defining without Scripture, may have handed down salutary doctrines ; or whether their tradition and religion ought to be abolished ? He answers, that the dogmas of the antient fathers, speaking by the Spirit of God, and according to Scripture, ought not to be despised, which no pious man will deny. With as little avail, he proves that there are in Scripture obscure places which the carnal man cannot comprehend, for the question is concerning the articles of faith and the foundation of religion ; and we ask, whether Scripture is obscure in treating of these ? It cannot be proved to be so ; and we are prohibited from adding any thing to the Divine Word, or abridging it.\* Christ himself says, that the Word which he preached was not his, but his Father's ; and when Christ and his apostles had not the power of preaching any other Word but that of God himself, how can other interpreters speak the truth, when they teach for religion their own notions and fancies, and not the express Word of God ? That this Word, in regard to the grand purposes of salvation and religion, is clear and lucid, the Psalmist affirms in many places. Its obscurity arises from those who despise it, who neglect it, and have no wish to learn ; as when the sun shines on a blind man, it is not because it fails of splendour that it is not visible, but because the man fails of sight ; so the Word is clear and luminous, although a carnal man, being blind as to spiritual things, perceives not its light, nor that it gives the knowledge of true religion. Nor do we read that the apostle Peter complained concerning the writing of St. Paul, but of perverse interpreters, and of those who corrupted St. Paul's meaning ; for such do not expound Scripture by a proper collation of passage with passage, in order to a saving faith, and according to the command of the apostle, who says that ' Scripture is not of private interpretation,' or of the other precept, which directs us to ' prophesy according to the proportion of faith.' It is said, that the antient fathers, as Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, had the Holy Spirit, and that,

\* Deut. iv. ; Gal. i.



therefore, their opinions ought to be received. We do not deny that they had the Holy Spirit, but it does not thence follow that all their dogmas are according to the analogy of faith, for they seem to have erred like other men, partly in contradicting themselves, and partly in contradicting the Holy Ghost. These very fathers, therefore, show us, themselves, that their writings ought to be read with caution."

The second part of the proposition, as it respects the nature of rites and ceremonies, led Olaus to observe, that he would readily allow, that some might have been instituted by the apostles and the primitive Church, of which no mention was made in Scripture. "But who shall tell us," he says, "what those rites are, since they are not spoken of in Scripture? or how can any one prove that those rites, about which we dispute, are the same as those which deserve to be regarded as apostolical? We do not, indeed, see that it is necessary that we should know what they are which Paul spoke of to the Corinthians, or John to Gaius, since they appear not in Scripture, for if it had been necessary that the Church should know them, certain it is that we should find some mention of them in the written Word." He then shows that the more important rites are really established on the authority of Scripture; and that, as for the rest, the Church has in all ages changed or annulled them, according to its own pleasure.

In the following propositions, the power of the Pope and the clergy, the authority of ecclesiastical decrees, the right of excommunication, and the degree of reverence to be paid to human mandates in contradistinction to those of God, formed the subject of discussion. The seventh proposition contained the question, whether a man is saved by his own merits, or solely by the grace of God? To this the Catholic champion replied, "that the disposition of a pious man to perform good works, comes from God, who gives to a regenerate man grace to work well, his own free-will intervening, that he may deserve the promised reward. So that it was truly said by the apostle, 'we are saved by grace,' and 'the

gift of God is eternal life;’ for the quality of doing well, and of possessing eternal life, belongs not to pious men, except by the grace of God, according to which he bestows his rewards. Thus the apostle Peter commanded that, by good works, we should make our calling and election sure;\* and hence it is proved that man is saved, first and principally, by the grace of God, and, secondarily, by his good works, which also derive their disposition, and the enjoyment of reward, from the same divine grace.”

Olaus contented himself with simply stating, in answer to these observations, the plain declarations of Scripture that we are saved by faith, and not by works; and that the reward is not to those who work, but to those that believe. The language, indeed, employed by his antagonist was studiously guarded, yet not so much so, but that a severe reasoner on the doctrine of evangelical justification would have seen much to reprehend. When it is said that man is saved, first and principally, by grace, but, secondarily, by his good works, a distinction is made which does not exist, if good works be entirely the fruit of grace, for good works are then but an effect of grace, just in the same manner as salvation itself is an effect of its operation, each being but a part of a whole, the two together forming the grand result of divine mercy, neither being the cause of the other, any more than the part of an object seen first, is the cause of the other, which becomes only gradually visible, or than the germ and bud of a flower are the cause of the flower. The bud, as well as the perfect plant, receives its life from a power beyond it; and the botanist who should speak of the flower as produced, first and principally, by a vegetative principle, and, secondarily, by the expansive power of the bud, would be ridiculed as guilty of language the most vague and unmeaning. But if it should be contended, that

\* 2 Pet. i. 10.—“Errat Latina versio addens textui hæc verba, *per bona opera*.” It is evident that the latter words were added by implication, from the conclusion of the verse; but no better instance can be shown of the danger of a translator’s attempting to complete the sense of Scripture by additions of his own.—Gerdes, Monument. Antiq., p. 167., t. iii.

good works belong to man himself, and not entirely to the grace of God, then the reasoning of the Catholic champion is foreign to the subject, for he plainly attributes them solely to the influence of a divine spirit. That Olaus did not press him upon the point may, perhaps, be accounted for, from his earnest desire to avoid any unnecessary provocative to dispute; but that he felt sooner satisfied on the subject, than the German reformers would have done, seems deducible from this, that he calls upon his opponent to acknowledge, from what he had conceded, that salvation was not to be sought for in human works, "that is," he says, "in indulgencies, fraternities, canonical hours, peregrinations, &c." as if, though these could not justify, works of another nature might.

The next question was, whether a monastic life could be established from Scripture? And in the answers to this the opponents were completely at variance, each urging, with full force, the usual arguments of the warmest defenders, and the bitterest antagonists, of the monastic system. The succeeding proposition asked, whether it was lawful for any man to change the institution of Christ in the Lord's Supper? To this the professor replied, that Christ had instituted all the sacraments, and that he alone gave the virtue and efficacy to them, which, according to St. Paul, is the grace that justifies: that for the distribution of the sacraments certain ministers are necessary, by whom many things, both as to words and gestures, are to be observed: that, although the essentials of the sacraments depend on the institution of Christ, yet the things which excite a proper reverence for them, as well on the part of him who administers, as on that of him who receives, have their origin with the apostles or the primitive Church, and cannot be lightly treated by Christians, who feel the reverence which is due to the Church; "and thus," he concluded, "the ordinance of the mass remains, as having been instituted by the Church, with proper ceremonies, and to be celebrated in a fit place, and with becoming vestments."



Olaus replied, "The Word of God remains for ever; neither is it lawful for any mortal to change that which Christ has commanded to be observed. We are prohibited from adding to, or taking from, the Word of God; whence it is evident that it cannot be allowed to any creature to change the institutions of Christ in the Holy Supper. Whatsoever pertains to the truth of this sacrament, whether in its essence or in its use, is to be preserved as especially instituted by Christ." The professor did not deny, that the essentials of the Lord's Supper ought to be preserved inviolate, and it was, therefore, immediately demanded, who gave the Pope of Rome permission to separate the cup from the bread in the celebration? It could not be denied, it was urged, that the Pope and his supporters had done this as unfaithful servants of the Lord, and true Antichrists. Having answered the common argument of the day, that the blood was in the body, and that, therefore, the laity suffered, in reality, no harm from being denied the cup, Olaus proceeded to show, that the sacrifice of Christ was one and sufficient, and that the pretended sacrifice of the mass was, consequently, a contempt of the true offering of the Saviour once for all, but necessary to the Church of Rome, so long as it should depend upon the contributions exacted from its deluded votaries.

In the next proposition, it was asked, whether any manifestations or apparitions might be expected, besides those spoken of in the Bible? Galle replied to this, that by such appearances God makes known to men the profundity of his wisdom, of which, otherwise, the human intellect could form no conception. The expression of St. Paul, "God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit," and others of a similar kind, were quoted to confirm this remark; and the employment of superior beings in ministering to the wants and safety of lower ranks of creatures, spoken of by the same apostle, furnished another illustration of the question. In his general argument on this part of the subject, Galle said many things which serve greatly to increase our knowledge of the current opinions of the age. Thus having brought forward some scriptural examples of

the appearance of both good and bad spirits, he says, "St. Martin and St. Anthony knew how to distinguish true from false apparitions. Who, therefore, shall disprove that this gift was bestowed on the Church? It is impossible for me to speak of apparitions in a few words, for new ones are daily seen. Augustine writes to Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, that the holy soul of Jerome had appeared to him on the day on which it had left the body. That this apparition was true, no pious man will deny, for the authority of Augustine is known to all. Still further, the apparition of Jerome to his disciple, Eusebius, in the third year after his death, and at the period when the heresy of denying purgatory began to be circulated, which heresy Cyril having in vain attempted to subdue by his own authority, he convoked a council of his bishops, and imposed on them a fast of three days, that they might devote themselves to contemplation, and earnest entreaties to the Lord to preserve the Church from so destructive an error. On the third night of this fast, St. Jerome appeared visibly to Eusebius, and consoled him, saying, that the heresy would soon come to an end, and affording a solemn proof by miracle that such would be the case. He then commanded Cyril to go with the rest of the bishops to his sepulchre at Bethlehem, and there to cover the bodies of three dead men with his grave-clothes, on doing which the dead were immediately to revive." This was done, it is stated, and as the dead revived, as had been foretold, the doctrine of purgatory, said the professor, was fully established. Nor was this all. "The third apparition," he continued, "which the Church has always regarded as holy and most worthy of belief, occurred at the finding of the bodies of St. Stephen, Gamaliel, and his son Abia. As these apparitions are most certainly to be believed, although not written in the Bible, it is manifest that other apparitions are to be credited, as well as those recorded in Scripture." To this reasoning, which was intended to convince men of learning and ability, as well as the multitude, it is added, "Such is the authority of the Church, which accepts these apparitions, that it may con-

ciliate the faith of Christians, according to Augustine, who says, *Epist. Fund. c. 5.*, "I should not believe the gospel unless moved by the authority of the Church." And though this may seem to be said respecting the primitive Church, the authority of the Church preserved from age to age must necessarily be the same; for Christ works with his Father in protecting it, and he promised that the Holy Spirit should lead it into all truth. Therefore I conclude, that apparitions which are not contrary to faith and the Scriptures, are to be believed, if proved true, according to the precept of the apostle, *1 John, iv.*"

Olaus replied to these arguments, which seemed so little to need a reply, "That the will of God was sufficiently known by his Word, but that Satan, envying the means of salvation offered to man, was perpetually endeavouring, by false suggestions and pretended apparitions, to draw his attention from revealed truth, never agreeable to the carnal heart: that the Church of God was founded on the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, and needed no new apparitions to confirm it: that he who seeks for such things chooses to be deceived by Satan, since it is not given to every one to discern the true from the false: that if we should refuse credit to all apparitions we should not sin, seeing that we are bound only by the written Word of God: that we are even forbidden to seek intelligence from the dead: *Deut. xix. Levit. xii. Is. viii. Luke, xvii.*; and that it was not the spirit of St. Jerome which is said to have appeared to Augustine, for that God certainly does not promise, that the souls of the pious should appear to the living in contempt of his Word; and that if the doctrine of purgatory ought to be received as an article of faith, it should be proved by Scripture, and not by a miracle contrary to Scripture."

The doctrine here alluded to formed the subject of the following proposition, and Gallus set out with the bold assertion, that no religious people had ever contradicted its truth. This he supported by the further statement, that the Church had proved it from holy Scripture, from true apparitions, from the consent of pious doctors,



and from the practice of the primitive Church. The usual argument from what is said respecting the sin against the Holy Ghost was brought forward, and the passage so often quoted from the second book of Maccabees, and some supposed allusions from the fathers. "Therefore," it is said, "the Church rightly prays for the dead, and has rightly instituted masses to free them from purgatory. Although there are many things which assist the dead, their principal help is the sacrifice of the mass, regarding which God is pleased to remit the punishment of the dead for whom that sacrifice is offered. And since nothing impure may enter heaven, those to be saved are purified in purgatory, the venial sins being remitted, for which, subjected to temporal punishments, they have offered no satisfaction. Thus the justice of God established purgatory."

Of all that was said in this celebrated conference, no expression was used so distressing to the mind of a humble believer in Christ as those which have been just recorded. Olaus replied, "that in the whole of Scripture not a text could be found in proof of the doctrine of purgatory; but that there were many which tended directly to disprove it; that the defenders of purgatory say, that they only are subject to its inflictions who have perpetrated venial sins, for which they have not sustained the deserved punishment on earth; whereas Scripture affirms that such sins are not to be punished, Jer. xxx.; Is. viii.; as God says, I will have mercy on their iniquities, and will not remember their sins; and how should God punish those whom he has placed in a state of grace?" "The article of purgatory, then," he continues, "is repugnant to our confidence of salvation in Jesus Christ, who satisfied for all the sins of all mankind; so that if any person appointed to salvation should have to suffer for his sins, this would be ignominious to Christ, who has truly satisfied for their full remission." Alluding to the passage respecting the sin against the Holy Ghost, in which our Lord, according to St. Matthew, says, it shall "not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come," he shows, that no inference can be drawn from this to support the notion,

that some sins may be pardoned in the next world, since St. Mark says, simply, that “he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost *hath never forgiveness.*” The passage from the book of Maccabees is shown to admit of an explanation which leaves it with little force, even should its authority be allowed; and the report of apparitions, and other testimonies peculiar to the Church, are treated as utterly unworthy of serious notice.

In the last proposition it was asked, whether the saints ought to be invoked, and whether they are our defenders, patrons, and intercessors before God? Galle answered this question in a tone, which seems to intimate, that his confidence increased in proportion as his argument became the more difficult to sustain. “A subject and a cause,” said he, “universally established, ought not to be regarded as matter of doubt. The holy Church flourishes by the authority thence derived, and thence it is that its customs, its rule of faith and its decrees, are approved of without disputation. And since there is no doubt in the Church that saints ought to be invoked, it is wonderful that any Christians should be found who dare venture to dispute this article. The saints are members of Christ, and therefore ought to be honoured. Notwithstanding, they are less honoured than those things which pertain to Christ himself, as the cross, the crown, the keys, and many other such things.\* The saints are not honoured as bestowing the grace of God themselves, but as partakers thereof, and fellow-citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and, therefore, our helpers in the sight of God. Abraham worshipped the angels who appeared to him; and Cornelius, St. Peter. St. Paul teaches Christians to honour one another; and hence, it cannot be doubted, but that departed saints, as our mediators and intercessors with Christ, must be worthy of honour. Not indeed so, that it should be imagined, that God is

\* We might almost suspect here the fairness of the report, for if the saints be very members of Christ, as they are affirmed to be, how can they be less venerable than the cross or the crown? This would be to make Christ himself inferior to the cross, unless we regard the union of His members as a mere creation of the fancy. Vertot, indeed, says, that Olaus made the report as unfavourable as he could to his adversary, but he does not name the passages to which he objects.

unable or indisposed to help us, unless moved by the intercession of the saints, but because He has so ordained it, and for this purpose, that the authority of the saints may thence shine the more conspicuously forth, and that He may be adored in them."

Olaus replied to this, that Scripture neither affirms nor denies that departed saints ought to be honoured, but plainly teaches, that worship is due to God alone, and that there is but one mediator between Him and mankind. No other argument was wanted to disprove the authority on which his adversary had attempted to establish his position; and the able advocate of the gospel closes his report of the debate with an apology for the simplicity of his reasoning, and a prayer that God would keep them in the truth.\*

The agitation, so common to conferences of this kind, had greatly lessened the prospect of a useful termination.† Each disputant urged his arguments with so much vehemence, that the auditors were unable fairly to weigh their force. Gustavus, seeing this, wisely stopped the debate, and directed that both Olaus and Galle should publish a clear statement of their opinions, that the nation might be better able to consider on which side it ought to determine. The means thus adopted for diffusing through the country correct information respecting the new doctrines, formed but a part of the excellent machinery set at work by the monarch for establishing the Reformation. Besides instituting a general visitation of the kingdom, with the view of discovering the state of both the clergy and the people, and imparting to the latter this simple truth, that the foundation of eternal life is the true knowledge of God,‡ he directed the Liturgy, and all other parts of the Church

\* Baazii Invent., Eccles. Sueo.-Goth., lib. II., c. vi., p. 202. Vertot. Gerdes, Monument. Antiquitat., t. iii., n. xviii., p. 153.

† Baazii Invent. Eccles. Sueo.-Goth., lib. II., c. iv., p. 165.—Vertot observes on this conference, "Le docteur Catholique employoit indifféremment l'autorité de l'Ecriture Sainte, la tradition, les pères et les conciles. Mais Olaus, se renfermoit obstinément dans l'autorité seule de l'Ecriture Sainte, et il vouloit obliger son adversaire à lui prouver les dogmes et même la discipline de l'Eglise par autant de passages formels du Nouveau Testament."—Hist. des Revol. de Suède, t. i., p. 328.

‡ This was urged, it is said, at the express desire of the king.



service, to be translated into the mother tongue. This was followed by an order for the translation of the Psalms; and soon after by another for the translation of the whole Bible into Swedish.\* The active inquiry which was being made, at the same time, into the incomes of the clergy, and the sources whence they were derived, created the strongest prejudice against these measures on the side of the Catholics. It was urged by the Archbishop of Upsal, in the name of his brethren, that the new version being but a copy of that of Luther, had been already condemned by the Holy See, and by the most famous universities of Europe. In regard to the means employed for diminishing their privileges and revenues, they could only have been invented, he said, by the enemies of religion; and he therefore besought the King, with all the earnestness of which he was master, to revoke the orders which were so likely to injure both the Church and its ministers.

Gustavus replied to this address, that the clergy having possessed themselves of the rights and revenues of the crown during the civil wars, it was now but consistent with his duty as a sovereign to inquire into the extent of the spoliation, and to provide a remedy for abuses so ruinous to the country: that, with regard to Olaus, he was as ready to abandon him as any other of his subjects, if convicted of heresy; but that he must be proved to be so before he could condemn him; whereas he had always heard his conduct and manners highly praised by all who were not provoked to jealousy by his reproofs of ignorance and unholiness; and that it was not the first time that he found theologians inclined to treat all indiscriminately as heretics who differed from them, whether on the greatest or the most trifling points.

\* Translationem horum, exemplo et imitatione B. Lutheri incepit M. Laurentius Andreæ, tunc presbyter Strengnensis, facto initio à N. Testamento, quod declarat summam ac fundamentum evangelii.—Baazii Invent., lib. II., p. 163.

Vertot says, Olaus published at this time a version of the New Testament, which version was nothing more than a translation of that of Luther.—T. i., p. 323. In speaking of the termination of the conference, he says that the King broke it up, for fear that Galle would prove that Olaus had corrupted the sacred text, in order to make good his cause.—P. 329.

When the archbishop continued, at the close of the conference, to assert the dangerous character of the new translation, Gustavus answered his objections by entreating him to make a translation himself, and thereby to give them an opportunity of comparing his view of the text with that of Olaus. To encourage the prelate, or rather to shame him, he observed that such an undertaking must prove of great advantage to his clergy, as well as to the people, seeing that there were so few who understood Latin, or who did not every day manifest their ignorance by the false interpretations which they gave of the meaning of Scripture.

As Gustavus was careful to intermingle some courteous expressions with these strong indications of his real feelings, the archbishop found himself constrained to suppress any sentiment of anger which might have arisen from the little success of his mission. He proceeded, therefore, to summon an assembly of the bishops, and the rest of the clergy, at Stockholm. In their meeting, he represented to them the wishes of the King, and the necessity which existed to oppose a translation of their own to that of Olaus: that if this were done, they would secure the favour of the prince, and might still retain him in the communion of the Catholic Church. But notwithstanding the cogency of the reasons which he urged in support of his proposition, he was strongly opposed. The Bishop of Lincopine represented that Jesus Christ had left the interpretation of Scripture in the hands of the bishops and doctors of the Church, in order that ignorant and simple people might have no occasion to dispute respecting it: that a translation, in the present state of affairs, would only serve to increase the progress of Lutheranism, as the people, aided by such a work, would erect themselves into judges of the controversy; that the Church and religion allowed not of examinations; that it had never approved the conference at Upsal; that Olaus, on the contrary, ought to have been sent to Rome, where he might have been convinced, as all such heretics ought to be, by fire and sword.

It could scarcely escape the notice of those who knew

the real state of the controversy, that it would have been better for the interests of the Church of Rome, could it have prevented the further circulation of the Scriptures among the people. But the archbishop saw clearly that it was impossible to escape the difficulty into which the King had drawn them, without encountering the worse evils attendant upon acknowledged weakness. He, therefore, insisted upon carrying his design into execution; and though the prelate who had spoken so forcibly against it now declared that, by his complaisance to the court, he would destroy the Church, he directed his clergy immediately to commence the work.

In order to expedite the fulfilment of the task, it was equally divided among the secular clergy and the regulars. To the former were assigned the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's Epistles; while the remaining portion was undertaken by the monks. The readiness manifested in this affair, to obey the will of the monarch, would have retarded, it was expected, the ruin of the Roman hierarchy. But the current of both opinion and events had set in so strong against them, that the most refined stroke of policy must have failed to save them. Gustavus needed money, and the people could not furnish it without being made to feel too soon that even a revolution is not always sufficient to set them free from oppressive burdens. At a meeting, therefore, of the senate at Stockholm, in the year 1526, he proposed, by his chancellor, that the expenses of his intended expedition\* should be furnished out of the revenues of the Church. For this purpose two-thirds of the tithes were to be taken, and it was intimated that no

\* The Emperor had proposed, it was said, to restore Christiern to the throne. Sweden might well be roused to indignation at such a report; but Gustavus still more than any other man in the country; for the wretched tyrant, having seized his mother and sister, who were unfortunately within his power at the time of the revolution, had them put into a sack and drowned. He had been driven from his throne, which was now occupied by Frederic Duke of Holstein, a friend to the Reformation. Christiern endeavoured, after ten years' exile in the Netherlands, to regain his kingdom; but was defeated and thrown into prison, where, having lingered for twenty-seven years, he died at the age of eighty.—Vertot.



great injury would be inflicted if the superfluous plate, or even some of the bells of the churches, were employed to supply the present want of money. The senators highly approved of this plan, and Gustavus lost no time in executing a design which seemed so favourable to his interests. Commissioners were appointed to visit the several dioceses, and the bishops appeared to have nothing left them but to submit in silence. No sooner, however, had they recovered from their first astonishment at the boldness of the King, than they began to remonstrate with him on the injustice of his proceedings. The commissioners, they said, acted in a manner scarcely to be looked for even from heretics; but when the Archbishop of Upsal personally addressed the King, he was dismissed with a brief and haughty assurance that it was too late to complain.

Finding that remonstrance was vain, an appeal was made to the passions of the people, and insurrections, which would have been full of danger to a monarch less energetic than Gustavus, speedily followed the movements of the aggrieved clergy. These efforts, however, proved as useless as the more legitimate measures adopted at an earlier period of the contest. The bishops saw themselves obliged to yield, and they resigned into the hands of the King fortresses which they ought never to have held, and which they were happily never to recover. A few exceptions only occurred to this apparent submission on the part of the prelates. The Archbishop of Upsal was among them.\* Nothing could induce him to sacrifice any portion either of his rights, or revenues. Gustavus, knowing his firmness, ceased from attempting to change his determination; but appointed him ambassador to Poland, for which country he set out, but with the clear understanding that he was in reality sent into perpetual banishment. Having waited some time at Dantzic for the despatches which, it was pretended,

\* This was John Magni, whom Gustavus himself had appointed to the see on the flight of the bigoted and ambitious Gustavus Trolle. He came to Sweden in quality of papal legate, and obtained the dignity, it is suspected, from the King's politic notion, that he might be able to induce him, out of gratitude, to favour the new plans of reform.

should be forwarded to him at that place, he repaired to Rome, and there endeavoured to rouse the Pope to take up arms against Sweden, and treat it as a nation of heretics, a course of operation to which the Pontiff could probably find no other objection than his utter inability to carry it into practice.

It is the common lot of churchmen, when stripped of their power, whether well or ill exercised, to be the victims of much cruelty and insult. The world can sympathize with that which belongs to itself, or bears the distinct marks of its own spirit. Warriors or statesmen, humbled by misfortune, are almost compensated for their loss of pre-eminence by the ready sympathies of their successful rivals. But ecclesiastics driven from their station by political storms, or the change of opinion, are either left to heartless neglect, or are subjected to every infliction of studied scorn. It is not enough to say that this is the effect of the indignation with which mankind behold unworthy ministers of religion; for whatever credit is usually given to the world on this score, the truth is, that it knows too little, and cares too little, about religion to feel sincerely zealous respecting the character of Christ's ministers. The real cause of the pleasure which it manifests in their downfall is the hostility of its spirit to religion itself; and, though not acknowledged perhaps even in a whisper, it has a notion that whenever any thing connected with its name becomes subject to change, its own cause must have gained an advantage over the antagonist spirit of holiness. We do not intend to apply these remarks in all their force to Gustavus; but his conduct, if what is recorded of him at this period be true, savoured much of a description of feelings far less noble than those by which he was generally animated. It is said, that when he had deprived the prelates of their castles, and taken other measures towards reducing their dignity, he invited them to a feast in his palace. They attended, but on proceeding to take the places usually accorded by courtesy to their office, they were obliged to yield them to the King's ministers. This to the true Christian would have been a matter not worthy of the least observation,

but it would not have, therefore, been the less unworthy of a generous and princely mind to attempt the infliction of such an affront.\*

When Gustavus found that the bishops were busy in preparing for resistance, and that they had engaged the grand Marechal Tureiohauson as their ally, he accelerated his movements, and, heading the commissioners himself, proceeded to take possession of the forfeited estates. No fewer than thirteen thousand large farms are said to have fallen into his hands in this progress. Most of the clergy enjoying rich benefices were driven out, and the monasteries, deprived of the means of support, saw their wonted inmates obliged to prepare for exile. This was a state of things which no humane heart could contemplate without grief. But it was less a consequence of the reformation of religion, than of the new views taken by the sovereign of the relative degrees of power, or of the right which claims the means of supporting power, belonging to the state and the Church. Had nothing been said about the gospel, or of translating the Bible into the language of the people, or of allowing the clergy to marry, a monarch placed upon the throne by a revolution effected in spite of the clergy, and against the consequences of which they were sworn to strive, would never have felt disposed to leave them in the tranquil enjoyment of possessions which, so long as they held them, would render their names and dignities illustrious above all others in the eyes of the multitude.†

\* This is the account given by Vertot, who places it under the date 1526, that is, before the meeting of the senate. A different version of the subject is found in Baazius; who says, that the prelates were placed below the senators of the kingdom in the conference; whereas the usual order was to place the archbishop next to the monarch, and then the several bishops above the senators, and the clergy in general above the rest of the nobility.—*Lib. II., c. xiii., p. 220.*—Vertot, t. i., p. 356.

† Fleury says, that Gustavus found little resistance on the part of the bishops and pastors of the second order. This appears to contradict the statements of all other historians; but that generally careful writer may have referred to an effectual, rather than a proposed resistance. The fairness of his account of the origin of the Reformation is plainly seen in the candid acknowledgment, that the insatiable avarice of the officers of the court of Rome, and the abuse of indulgences, were the cause of the extinction of the faith in these kingdoms of the north, as they had been in many provinces of the empire.—*L'Hist. Eccles., t. xxvi., l. 131, n. 60.; t. xxv., l. 125, n. 46.*



The effect of these changes was not the same among the inferior clergy. Less aware of the real state of affairs, less deeply imbued with the prejudices which so readily cling to the fears as well as the pride of lofty station, they appear to have viewed the Reformation without any dread of its imposing upon them a burden which might not easily be borne. If this is to suppose that the majority of them were indifferent to the more important matters involved in the change, it is what, in parallel cases, would be readily admitted. The unhappy consequences of the long reign of ignorance and corruption are generally conspicuous in the debased character of the priesthood, and should they be found ready to embrace, without inquiry, any new system proposed to them, rather than resign their emoluments, their venality must evidently be traced to the Church under which they grew up, and not to the principles, whether good or bad, with which they now allow themselves to be inoculated. But, in reality, much had been done in Sweden by the labours of Olaus, and the means employed at the desire of the monarch for instructing the clergy. Their willingness, therefore, to embrace the reformed doctrines must, in many cases, be traced to their improved understanding of Scripture, and an awakened sense of their responsibility as the ministers of Christ to preach his gospel pure and uncorrupted. The writings of Olaus were eminently calculated to convey instruction on the principal points of evangelical doctrine. Simple in style, and abounding in scriptural proofs, they could not fail to impress unprejudiced minds with respect for his mingled earnestness and candour. He appealed so forcibly to the plain statements of the Bible, that he laid himself open on all sides to the attacks of every one who could read it, and who acknowledged its authority. This was the writer most needed for such a period, and such a country. A writer less simple would not have been understood; less scriptural he would have done no good; more impassioned or imaginative, and he would have done harm.

In Sweden, as in other countries, the monastic orders

presented a far stronger front to the approaches of the reformers than the secular clergy. When the latter had been persuaded, or constrained, to adopt the views of the sovereign, the monks were busy in contriving plots, not only to resist the purposed improvements, but to overthrow the government itself. The dangers attending such measures soon created a division in their ranks, and the hope of finding the means of exchanging a life of wearisome retirement for one of equal ease, and more pleasure, in the world, was sufficient to prompt many to conceal their indignation in the first retreat which offered. Others, who really lamented the loss of their privileges, as granted them for the sake of piety, were not of a disposition to engage in a conflict which required so entire a sacrifice of Christian humility and resignation. The body of monks, therefore, who remained steady to the plan of resistance, was composed of the lowest and most turbulent members of the class. This, however, did not render their co-operation less valuable in the eyes of the prelates who had determined on making a last effort for the recovery of their possessions. They were ready to preach sedition, and follow up their lessons by entering the field themselves. No scruple, derived from a sense of patriotism, existed in their minds; and as the worst state of public affairs had been that under which they had flourished most, the first fruits of confusion would furnish them with a reward for their hardihood.

The province of Dalecarlia was the most uncultivated part of the country. Its inhabitants, consisting chiefly of miners and woodmen, had retained, with their rude habits, the superstition of the darkest ages.\* The efforts, consequently, which were found sufficient to diffuse a considerable portion of light in other districts, failed almost entirely of success in this remote quarter. There the preachers who dealt most in the extravagances of tradition, and supplied the richest amount of promises derived from the treasury of the Church, had the best success; and when they announced to the benighted people, that these sources of good were about to be cut off by those

\* Vertot, t. i., p. 382.

who were the enemies of the Church, of religion, and of God, the excitement produced fully equalled the desire of the malecontents, and they plainly saw that whatever could be effected by savage strength and courage would be performed on their behalf.

Aided by the counsels of the Bishop of Scara, by Tureiohauson, the grand marechal, and some other persons of rank, the peasants and the monks began to present a formidable appearance to all but Gustavus himself. With the promptitude which marked all his movements, he prepared to march against them at the moment when his presence was most needed, and his skilful conduct most likely to produce a complete discomfiture of the rebels. Every thing tended to convince his people of the ability of the man whom they had chosen to be the champion of their liberties, and, at the same time, of the rights of conscience, and the interests of religion and holiness. The seditious monks and their allies dispersed as soon as he appeared; the bishops who had urged them into sedition saved themselves by a precipitate flight; and the nation saw itself delivered, far sooner than it might have expected, from the dangers of a civil war.

Gustavus had encountered difficulties in this struggle, under which, with all his energy, he seemed at one time ready to sink; but the defeat of the Dalecarlians, and his success in the meeting of the senate in 1527, reduced the opponents of the Reformation to so low a condition, that he no longer thought it necessary to delay the establishment of Lutheranism as the religion of the land. He, therefore, openly declared himself a convert to the reformed doctrines, and in a general meeting of the clergy, held at Orebro in 1529, the several orders, not excluding even the monks, entered into a solemn agreement that they would preach only the pure Word of God. It was also further determined, that the Latin text of the New Testament should be introduced into schools; that the pastors of country parishes should visit the towns in order to be instructed by learned preachers in the interpretation of Scripture; that no abusive or irritating language should be ad-



mitted into sermons; and that the people should be taught the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ave Maria; and be twice a month especially instructed in the Ten Commandments. To secure conformity in these respects, the monks were placed under the immediate oversight of the bishops, and the latter were especially directed to check the disorders which had sprung from the unlicensed conduct of the mendicants. As many evils had also attended the numberless holidays prescribed by the Roman Church, the festivals were reduced to those which commemorated the principal events in the life of the Saviour, or the labours of his apostles and first disciples. With the design of calling the attention of the ignorant from vain signs and ceremonies to the sublime realities of the gospel, it was declared, that the use of holy water was not to wash away sins, which could only be done by the blood of Christ, but to remind men of their baptism; that the images of saints were not put up in churches to be worshipped, but to awaken thoughts of holiness, and to inspire the heart with a wish to imitate their example. In the same manner other practices of the Church were so explained as to render them less abhorrent from the tenor of the gospel. But their being retained affords a striking proof both of the caution and moderation with which the successful party still found it expedient to act. The power of the state, wielded with skill and energy, was sufficient to suppress the boldest opposition of the hierarchy, combined with the ready help of all the malecontents in the kingdom; but it could not have overcome by any sudden effort the prejudices of the people. These would have proved themselves alike invincible by force, and impenetrable to dictatorial argument. It will always be found that much may be done in favour of pure doctrine before the old forms and practices of a corrupt church can be rooted out from popular affection. The errors which belong to the mind are sooner parted with than those which have any thing to do with the heart or the sympathies. Had the reformers, therefore, endeavoured to carry their design by force, they would, in all probability, have found themselves defeated at the

first onset, and have seen prejudices armed against them which no more yield to the strokes of spiritual weapons, than do the phantoms of the night to those of the mailed warrior. Gustavus and his advisers were keenly alive to this, and they acted accordingly; but they are open to the fair censure of those who, though they may allow somewhat to the necessity of the case in the first instance, are less willing to treat indulgently reformers who leave untouched, at a late period, what could only be excused to the ignorance and weak apprehensions of a people scarcely aware of what was needful to the health of their souls, or the glory of God.

In the Manual published by Olaus Petri in 1529, many of the practices used at baptism, though unsupported either by scriptural authority, or right reason, were still prescribed as part of the service.\* In the office for the visitation of the sick, great caution is manifested lest either the patient should be deprived of the comfort which he sought, or the teacher of the gospel be drawn into the countenance of error. "If the sick man," it is observed, "should desire extreme unction, let the faithful minister of the Church inform him that it is not necessary, since the unction of the Holy Spirit given for the remission of sins, and confirmed by the Lord's Supper, is sufficient for his need." "But if," it is added, "the sick man insists that that which is according to the custom of his country ought not to be denied him, let the minister admonish him, that he must by no means regard the unction as a sacrament, procuring for him who receives it remission of sins, for this opinion would derogate from the efficacy of the communion, and mingle with religion a dangerous superstition." The directions for the burial of the dead were for the most part consistent with a sober piety, but towards the conclusion of the service it is said, "If the state of the dead permit

\* Cumque ritus ipsi non spectent per se causam salutis, monuit pius rex Gustavus prædicatores Holmenses ne scandala darent infirmioribus per celerem horum abrogationem. Sic manserunt hi ritus in baptismo, tamen notâ linguâ administrandi. Infans baptizandus muniretur signo crucis, ejusque ori infunderetur sal, non tamen exorcizatum. Exorcismus vulgaris etiam servaretur, et oleo ungeretur infans, jamque baptizatus, novâ stolâ indueretur, et postquam is sumpsisset lychnum in manibus, est cum benedictione dimissus.—Baazii, lib. II., c. 18, p. 245.

that supplications should be made for him, we pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst have mercy upon him."

The archiepiscopal see of Upsal having now been some time vacant, the clergy of the province were summoned in the year 1531 to elect one of their number to fill the important office. Four were proposed, but the choice fell by a large majority on Laurentius Petri, the brother of Olaus.\* The character of this estimable man is described as exhibiting the truest influences of christian piety. In the place of his brother's vigour and invincible zeal, he possessed a deep and loving gentleness of spirit, that prompted him to seek, for the sake of charity, the things which others pursued from motives compounded of feelings that only occasionally pointed to the great cause of mercy. His elevation was, therefore, regarded as a blessing by those who most earnestly desired the success of the Reformation; and Gustavus, to prove his approbation of the choice of the clergy, and his wish to give honour to the see, bestowed on Laurentius the hand of a lady of the blood royal.

Nothing now remained to hinder the uniform progress of the reformed doctrines through Sweden. Scripture was established as the foundation of the national faith, and an alliance with the Protestant princes of Germany gave additional strength to the government of its enterprising monarch.† Disputes unfortunately arose in the course of time between Gustavus and the chief promoters of the Reformation. They had their origin in the jealousy with which the two parties regarded the several interests of which they considered themselves the chosen guardians. The King had formed freer notions on the subject of church property than it would have been consistent, perhaps, with the clergy of any age or country to support. As he proceeded, therefore, in the execution of his designs, both the archbishop and his brother, with their constant associate, the prudent and enlightened chancellor, Lawrence Anderson, deemed

\* Baazii, lib. II., c. 23, p. 258.

† Ambassadors from the Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, visited the court of Gustavus in 1537; the period when so great an effort seemed necessary to resist the common enemy.—Baazii, lib. II., c. 24., p. 260.



it necessary to oppose themselves to the further diminution of the ecclesiastical revenue. The strife, begun from causes of this nature, was not a little promoted by the dread which Gustavus continued to feel, lest the arrogance and tyranny of the Romish priests might appear only to have changed sides, and to have imparted to the advocates of reform just as much of selfishness and illiberality as it had taken from the clergy of an elder day. This fear might, it is probable, be heightened by what the continued prosperity of the triumphant party daily brought forth. As the new bishops and wealthy incumbents of the reformed Church became more accustomed to the advantages of their station, they were exposed to a proportionably increasing temptation to set too high a value on their worldly success. It is not reformation, but renovation only, that can preserve a church, or its members, from dangers of this kind.

The combined anxiety, therefore, to defend the incomes necessary to the support of a religious establishment, and the desire of resisting any attempt at carrying on the system of change, beyond their notions of expediency, gave a tone to the sentiments of the clergy, at the period to which we allude, far different from that which would have suited the temper of a monarch like Gustavus. He, in reality, was little indebted to the clergy; whereas they owed much to him in their capacity of religious reformers, and every thing to him in their personal condition. This was not likely to be lost sight of by a sovereign so acute in his observation; nor was the prospect, which now presented itself, fitted to check him in any desire to disarm the Church of the power, which it might be wishing to exercise against his authority. The general tranquillity of the kingdom was the result of his own firmness. It had not grown out of the fervent and simultaneous burst of national gratitude for religious light. It had not derived its defences from the close combination of the secular with the ecclesiastical institutions, for time had not yet been granted to cement them together in the common affections and loyalty of the people. The sovereign, there-

fore, might easily be induced to regard any appearance of systematic opposition to his will, on the part of the reformed clergy, with mingled regret and suspicion ; while, on the other hand, the clergy themselves could not have ceased from pressing forward arrangements, deemed necessary to the safety of the Church, without a manifest violation of the duty for which they had become responsible. Unfortunate signs of insurrection quickened the observation and jealousy of the King ; and these dispositions were skilfully fermented by the remains of the Roman-Catholic party, which seems still to have cherished the hope of recovering some portion of its influence. At length an occasion presented itself for the triumph of royal authority. Olaus Petri and the chancellor were suspected of being, in some way, mixed up with the faction which had not scrupled to speak of a counter-revolution. It was considered right, that their whole conduct should be subjected to a severe examination. They were accordingly placed on their trial ; and it then appeared, that the communications made to them were given in the confessions of some of the malecontents, and that, treasonable as were the designs thus revealed, they considered themselves bound, by the nature of their office, to keep the secret so trustingly deposited in their ears. But it was argued against them, that both the King, and the nation at large, might have been involved in utter ruin while it was in their power to save them ; and that such conduct deserved the punishment due to convicted traitors. Had not the popularity of Olaus, and the valuable qualities of the chancellor, been employed as a ready shield on the occasion, they would, in all probability, have fallen under this attack ; but after a brief interval they were both restored to their offices, and to the favour of the King. It was manifest, however, that he did not intend to allow the Church to press any more on the authority of the state. The archbishop was admonished, that Christ and Paul taught men to obey their temporal rulers, and not to resist them, or treat their dignity with contempt ; that the Protestant clergy were beginning to shew as much

ambition and love of wealth as the priests of the Roman Church; and that it would be more consistent with their duty, to exhibit the simple truths of the gospel, than to deal in slanders, or proud reproofs. This stern address had its origin in the somewhat too bold remarks which had been made by Olaus Petri in a sermon on the use of oaths, and in which he had spoken of the King with a freedom that was, perhaps, as inconsistent with Christian charity as it was with prudence and good taste. But Gustavus was not content with simply dealing out reproofs. He formally declared that, for the future, no changes should be made either in rites or discipline, except by his express consent, and that no book, or document, should be printed, till it had received his license. This would have destroyed the freedom of the Church, had it not, by the blessing of God, received the invigorating grace of Protestantism, or, to speak more correctly, had He not been pleased to bestow upon its genuine converts the gifts of his Spirit; for, "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty;" and in vain may the stormy floods of adverse events, in vain may the fiercest of human tyrants, rage against the Church which it sanctifies and strengthens. There is a renewing power in the heart of that Church, and however the winds howl around it, its lamp shall never be put out.

In the midst of the occurrences, which tended so much to disturb the progress of the Reformation at this time, in Sweden, a new claimant to the attention of Gustavus appeared at his court. This was Norman, a Pomeranian nobleman, who had been recommended by Luther and Melancthon to take charge of the King's son. He soon acquired a strong ascendancy over the rest of the monarch's favourites; but his principles were correct, and his understanding clear. The use, therefore, which he made of his influence was of important service to the cause of Protestantism. Aided by him, Gustavus re-modelled the government of the national Church; and in an assembly of the bishops, held in 1540, the few remains of papal superstition were boldly assailed, and the establishment, four years afterwards,



was placed on the indisputable grounds of evangelical simplicity and truth.

By these steps, the long reign of ecclesiastical tyranny, with all the evils under the shadow of which it commenced its operation, was brought to a close in Sweden. The triumph of religious freedom has rarely been of that pure kind which would satisfy an honest inquirer, if desired to speak with unqualified approbation of its several stages. But allowing much to human infirmity; something to inconsistency; and yet more to the inherent pride, selfishness and corruption of men's hearts, still a vast residue presents itself on which the eye of the sternest judge may rest with satisfaction. In the case before us, while we regret that the forfeiture of wealth, devoted from time immemorial to the service of religion, was the price which the civil power set on its assistance, we cannot but rejoice in the display of that merciful Providence, which so ordered events, that that power could be so profitably put in action, however great the sum demanded for its work. While again we acknowledge with honest regret, that the champions of the Reformation laid themselves open to the charge of reviving that which was really most dangerous in the defeated party, its ambition, its love of power, its tendency to encroach on the state, we cannot help rejoicing in the many proofs which exist, that by the Reformation, the religion of the people, and the salutary influence of the government, were placed much further out of the reach of any corrupt church authority than they had been since the first blending of Christian, with political, affairs. While, in the last place, it is calculated to fill the mind with many feelings of sadness, to discover that, under the teaching of the gospel, received at first with delight, no small portion of vice yet remained unshaken, who can fail to rejoice when, by every fair calculation, it is seen, that instances of spiritual conversion have been wonderfully increased since the Reformation; and that when the result has not been so nobly decisive, there has, at least, been a mighty increase in the number of those who acknowledge, that they are to be saved from their sins, not by putting on the cloak

of a formal religion, but by a change of heart and character; a confession of mighty value in itself, inasmuch as it defines the boundaries between true holiness and its counterfeits of every kind, between the world in all its various states of refinement, or superstition, or rationalism, and the kingdom of heaven, and of Christ. The estimate of the advantages attending the Reformation in Sweden may be applied to the case of most Protestant countries. Far less good than might, theoretically, have been looked for from the purification of the churches, has attended this great change. The adversaries of the Reformation are not to be accounted dishonest in their argument when they speak of the errors of some of those who promoted it, or of the evils and inconsistencies which manifested themselves in the midst of the triumph gained on the side of truth and religious liberty. But they are unwise advocates of Protestantism who claim for it freedom from error, as if it were itself divine; or who forget, in estimating the blessings it has conferred, that when they represent it as omnipotent against vice, or hypocrisy, they place it above Christianity itself, which, from the first, was clouded by the errors of its friends, and has never yet, on great masses of mankind, been allowed to operate with its influences unchecked, or its appeals uncontradicted. This it is that we assert on the side of the Reformation. It has put into every man's hand the keys of heaven; for it has given him the Word of life: it has taught him to depend upon the all-sufficient atonement of Christ for his justification; and on the grace of the Spirit, promised to the prayer of faith, for sanctification. It has thrown light upon the dark ways of human pride and hypocrisy; it has demonstrated the value of thought and inquiry, and the liberty of conscience, and the responsibilities attending it. Thus it has opened the way to life, and shown how the means of strength are to be obtained. That fewer have availed themselves of the blessing than ought to have been the case, is to be deplored in the same way in which we lament the comparatively little use made of any spiritual advantage. But if by it nations have been placed in the best situation for hearing the voice

of heaven, and individuals for being impressed with the necessity of spiritual sanctification, and the sufficient power of the gospel to instruct them in the method of salvation, a good has resulted from the establishment of the Reformation, which, though hedged in by temporary obstacles, will at length burst its bounds, and become identical with the cause of holiness in every nation of the world.

Denmark had suffered from the corrupt state of its clergy the same evils as Sweden. The power of the bishops, supported by enormous wealth, by fortified castles and numerous bands of armed vassals, lay like an incubus on the heart of the nation. To support a power of this kind, pure and undefiled religion afforded no help. Hence it was necessary that means should be taken to establish a system more easily conformable to the ambitious desires of its preachers. An extravagant employment of the facilities furnished for such purposes, might be ventured upon in a country where there was but little intelligence, and any teaching was likely to prove acceptable to the people, provided it pointed their attention to objects which might rouse, and awe, and stimulate the feelings which had been frozen beneath the barren soil of ordinary existence. A consideration of this point, in respect to Denmark, may serve to aid our inquiries into the state of other countries when under the power of a corrupt church. The influence of Rome fostered the evil principles at work in many countries, but it did not give birth to them in all; nor is it chargeable with the barbarism under the cover of which it planted its engines, any more than a disease which effects but little harm in a sound constitution, ought to be accounted fatal, because it has proved so in a body already beginning to decay. Whether the tyranny of civil rulers, assisted by the ignorance of the people, would not have produced effects as injurious both to the social condition, and the moral feelings of nations, as any that have been ascribed to religions false in themselves even, may be fairly questioned. In lamenting, therefore, the awful state of the countries which have for ages groaned under ecclesiastical corruptions, we



see but one class of evils taking the place of another, or rather one class of oppressors stepping in to reap the harvest for which another had laboured. That this was the case in Denmark, and in other countries similarly situated, appears from the fact, that the magnates of both classes were perpetually struggling for rights which they claimed for themselves, while the people were almost wholly forgotten, or left to struggle on, as they best might, through the dark confusion created by their strife.

Christiern II. presented in his character a melancholy combination of actual vices, with many pretensions to virtue. At the first intelligence which reached his ears respecting the doctrines of Luther, he saw their value, and expressed a desire that his subjects might be allowed to participate in the blessing of the dawning light. Aware of the opposition which was likely to attend their circulation in Denmark, he issued positive orders, that no violent measures should be taken by the clergy to prevent their being preached to the people.\* It is not by any means certain, that he was sufficiently long-sighted to be able to calculate what great advantages might result from the revolution to sovereigns in their contests with Rome. The feeling, on the contrary, expressed by his contemporaries, would favour the belief, that he was really inspired by reverence for the truth, when he thus, in the very earliest stage of the Reformation, exhibited a wish to further its interests. Unfortunately for him, he soon became its enemy, sacrificing its interests to the expediency of the moment, and only bearing with it when he might use it as a weapon, considered to be poisoned, against his enemies and rivals.†

The Church of Rome had been long an object of angry rivalry with the King when the Reformation was first made known in Denmark.‡ It had furnished a powerful body in the nation with the means of effectually resisting his views, and depriving his crown of the

\* Seckendorf, *Comm. de Luth.*, lib. I., sec. 110.

† Christiern n'étoit guères plus Catholique que Gustave, mais il avoit intérêt de le paroître, parce que son ennemi s'étoit déclaré Lutherien, et il ne pouvoit espérer de le chasser et de se rétablir que par le moyen du clergé et des Catholiques.—Vertot, t. i., p. 402.

‡ Gebhardi *Geschichte der K. Dänemark*, t. ii., s. 735.

lustre which might fairly be regarded as constituting its chief value in the eyes of an ambitious monarch. The struggle between the two great parties in the state would have continued till terminated by the well-ascertained omnipotence of the one or the other, had not the Providence of God ordered that they both should be brought under subjection to the better-ascertained principles of his own law, and his renovating and purifying gospel.

It was to some students who had listened to the theological lectures in the University of Wittemberg, that Denmark was indebted for its earliest instructions in the doctrines of the Reformation.\* We can scarcely imagine a situation more interesting, or exciting, than that of an ingenuous mind, long accustomed to hear a language which communicated none of the truths after which it panted, suddenly finding itself placed within a sphere which shed light into its innermost being, awakening and informing it at the same moment, delivering it from the oppression of error, and, at the same instant, crowning it with all the glories of truth.

And this was the state of those who, having been bred up in the heart of a country singularly oppressed by superstition, were now called upon to act as ministers of the gospel of Christ. Difficulties of every kind stood in the way of their success, but Divine Providence wrought for them and with them. The ruthless conduct of Christiern had not yet rendered him an object of detestation to his people, when the first attempts were made to resist the overwhelming barbarism of the land. He had favoured the establishment of a religious society at Copenhagen, consisting of men whose piety and learning promised to effect no small improvement in the systematic teaching of theology. The original foundation was a college of Carmelites, but by the patronage of the King, and the helps afforded by the neighbouring districts, it had been converted into a useful school of

\* Pontoppidani, *Annales Eccles. Danicæ*, t. ii., B. VI., c. 3, p. 764. A nobleman named Peter Lille, or, from the town where he was born, Roeskild, Rosæfontanus, is said to have been the leader in this good work. Pontanus describes him as “*vir elegantis ingenii*,” a description, it is worthy of remark, applicable to many of the early reformers. He was made professor of rhetoric at Copenhagen, and lived to the year 1559.

divinity. At the head of the institution was Paulus Eliæ, a theologian of great eminence, but who now appeared willing to resign every other claim to honour but that founded on the knowledge and love of truth. He had read the writings of Luther, and learnt the wonderful things which he was effecting for the gospel. This quickened his already ardent desire to engage in the same work, and he began to expound the Scriptures with equal diligence and success. The usual cry was set up against his mode of teaching. He was accused of introducing heresy, and destroying the defences of the Church. "There are those," he remarked, "who would rather have the reign of barbarism eternal, than run the hazard of losing the smallest portion of honours, like those enjoyed by the scribes and rabbis of old. They do not understand that it is not religion, but envy, which leads them to hate literature, of which they are utterly ignorant, and against which they rage in mere madness of heart, exclaiming that he is a heretic who interprets in the schools either Christ, or Peter, or Paul. For my part, I venerate piety and authority in all; I even acknowledge dignity, though existing in the wicked, but impiety, tyranny, pride and avarice I detest, and shall for ever detest."

These noble sentiments animated the mind of Paulus sufficiently long, to make him a most useful advocate of opinions introductory to the Reformation. That he afterwards deserted the cause so courageously adopted, afflicts the Christian with melancholy recollections of the levity and capriciousness of the human heart.\* But God employs his instruments as long as He needs them. The interests of the gospel were not now to be left dependent on mere desultory exertion; and the progress of events brought new forces into operation, that speedily rendered it superior to the power of its enemies. Christiern beheld with extreme indignation the pro-

\* He is spoken of as "*Apostata pessimus persecutor*;" and his common nickname was Paul Wendekaabe, that is, one who changes his coat as often as the wind. It is said that he was stopped in his career by the promise of a rich prebend.—Pontop., p. 766-8.



ceedings of Arcimbold the papal legate. The preaching of indulgences had been followed by such copious contributions to the treasury of St. Peter, that, whatever might have been the character of the prince, he could scarcely have witnessed the effects of superstition in this case, without a reference to the probable ruin of his people. Irritated already by the ambition of the clergy, it wanted but this fresh cause of offence, to induce Christiern to lay plans for the humbling of the ministers of Rome. With this view, mingled, it is possible, with some portion of awakened respect for the gospel, he sent to his relative, the Elector of Saxony, desiring him to provide a learned Lutheran teacher, who might expound in Denmark the main points of the reformed doctrines. Frederic gladly attended to this request, and recommended a pious and excellent preacher, named Martin. Christiern immediately appointed him to a church in Copenhagen, and he commenced his labours with good prospect of success. The people flocked to hear him, some in the expectation of being amused by novelties, and others from the desire, it may be hoped, of gathering information on a subject which now began to be generally discussed.\* His learning and ability protected him from the criticisms of the Romish clergy, as to the more important matters of doctrine, but his peculiarities of manner afforded a ready subject for ill-natured remark, and this soon degenerated into the coarse ribaldry, suited to the apprehensions of the lowest of the people. Religion was made to suffer from the defects of the preacher. The mimicry which compelled a laugh at his mannerism, led at length to the feeling that it was lawful to laugh at the subject of his discourses. Much harm was, therefore, likely to be done, and observing men learnt a lesson which it would be well to see always remembered. In proportion to the weigh-

\* Gelhardi Geschichte, t. ii., s. 758. Pontop., t. ii., s. 767.—The throng was so great, it is said, that those who were not in the church at an early hour were obliged to remain outside. That this was but a deceptive appearance of zeal is proved beyond dispute by the fact, that Martin could only speak German, and that therefore his discourse must have been unintelligible to the mass of his hearers.

tinness and novelty of the subject, should be the effort of the teacher to let nothing in himself tend to waken thoughts either opposite to, or even distinct from, the purpose of his discourse. Doctor Martin, it is said, returned to Wittenberg, convinced, perhaps, that it would be in vain for him to strive against a force so mighty, among the uninformed of every class of society, as ridicule and prejudice.

Christiern continued to further the attempts of the few, who were more encouraged by the hope that the blessing of God would attend their labours, than daunted by the threats or satire of the world. But the day was approaching when the powers of darkness were, as it seemed, to be let loose upon him, and when every restraint was to be broken through but that which Satan had prepared against his obeying one dictate of humanity. In the year 1523, an assembly of the states was held in Jutland; and, after his general conduct had been represented under the forms most likely to irritate and alarm, it was asserted, that he had already placed himself at the head of an army, with which he intended to ravage Denmark, and cut off its nobles and bishops, as he had destroyed those of Sweden. Terrified at this report, some of the members of the assembly immediately proposed that they should proceed to the election of a new king. The aspect of affairs appeared to justify this bold measure; and the tidings of the event produced an effect upon the mind of Christiern, which proved how little he was befriended by his conscience in the hour of danger. Unable to form any plan of defence, he meditated an ignominious flight. For this purpose, he hastily collected a fleet of twenty ships. These he filled with whatever treasure he could gather together; and, when dissatisfied with the quantity of gold and silver deposited in the royal coffers, he is said to have broken open the treasury, in which were kept the funds of the nation, reserved for seasons of peculiar exigence. Not yet content, he is still further accused of having stripped the churches of their ornaments,\* and

\* This is not named by the Danish chronicler Pontoppidan, but is stated by other historians of this period as a fact generally credited. The appella-

thus laden with ill-gotten booty, to have left his country to its fate. He steered his course to Belgium where he was sure of finding a safe asylum under the protection of the Emperor.

The departure of Christiern seemed to justify the proceedings undertaken for the election of a new king; and Frederic, Duke of Holstein, uncle to the dethroned monarch, was elected to the throne. After a brief interval, the several states of the kingdom were ready to confirm the revolution thus strangely begun. Frederic was everywhere acknowledged as King of Denmark; and new hopes and fears quickly succeeded to the desponding thoughts created in most men's minds by the conduct of Christiern. The situation of the favoured prince was one of difficulty; and the measures which it was necessary for him to adopt to give security to his throne, were ill adapted to the furthering of the views which were most accordant with his convictions. While he was mainly indebted for the crown to the dread which the nobles and bishops entertained of his predecessor, so it was essential that he should continue to seek their favour. A Protestant in his heart, and not wishing to conceal his desire to spread the pure doctrines of the Reformation through the land, he yet was compelled to begin his reign by granting the Roman-Catholic prelates whatsoever they desired. Their rights and revenues were secured to them on a firmer basis than ever; and the power which had been shaken by the attempts of Christiern was thus restored to greater vigour than it had possessed in the far more hopeful times of the dominant church. It was even said at the time, that this policy of Frederic, whatever might be the superiority of his own character over that of the deposed monarch, was fraught with evils to the nation; and that he had, in reality, imposed upon it many tyrants for one.

But whatever might be the difficulties which beset the path of the new monarch, his desire to promote the

tion of 'Blood-bath,' given to the King, records a far deeper crime. He is known to have said, that he was about to go to Rome, there to perform penance for his sins.--Pontop., t. ii., s. 777.



Reformation rendered him, in the sequel, both its faithful and successful champion. He had also, from the first, the valuable support of his son Christiern, a man of excellent ability, and well versed in the doctrines of Protestantism. Having less reason for the exercise of caution, and feeling perhaps more deeply interested in the cause, the prince did not follow the policy of his father, but at once put forth the utmost of his influence, and employed every means in his power for the effectual purifying of the national faith. That he succeeded, to a considerable degree, is proved by the concurrent testimony of many witnesses: that portions of his dominions remained obstinately blind to the blessings offered them, is proved still more plainly by the melancholy record of the death of Henry Zutphen, whose martyrdom was the frightful trophy of the last victories of superstition and papal tyranny over the liberties of truth and holiness.

In no instance has the superintendence of Divine Providence been more remarkably evident, than in the fact, that Denmark owed the first translation of the Scriptures to the flight of its monarch. One of the devoted and most learned advocates of the Reformation saw sufficient to reverence, either in the original dispositions of the fugitive Christiern, or in the simple character of sovereignty, to induce him to encounter every peril rather than forsake that prince in his misfortunes. During a visit of the exiled family to Saxony, at the suggestion of the sovereign himself, or inclined by the desire of still being useful to the cause of religious freedom in his native land, Hans Michaelson undertook the translation of the apostolic Epistles and of the book of Revelations. We name these in the first place, because no certain record appears to exist concerning the authors of the version of the Gospels and the Acts. It is, however, clearly stated, that Christiern did all in his power to promote the execution of this important work; and that both he, and his really amiable and pious consort, manifested during their intercourse with the German Reformers an eager anxiety to acquire the most comprehensive knowledge of their doctrines.

The readiness with which men are found, in seasons of important changes, whose dispositions and abilities are admirably adapted to carry on the designs of Heaven, affords a striking proof that these revolutions take not place without an especial divine preparation. Denmark had its apostles and evangelists as well as other nations; and no great event in the history of the Church of Christ, in any nation, can be mentioned, without its recalling to mind the signal virtues of some saint or confessor, whose labours evidently connected the dispensations of heaven with the workings of the Spirit in the soul of man. The ecclesiastical annals of the northern nations are less fertile in striking or pathetic examples of heroism than those of other countries. Fewer inducements are, therefore, held out for the historian to multiply the details of his narrative. But it is not in the more exciting instances of personal fortitude, that the religious inquirer is always to look for the best evidences of the workings of divine power, or that he is to expect the truest reward for his labours, if he is striving to learn how the Lord brings about the fulfilment of his intentions.

Among the few whose names have been handed down to us as eminently serviceable in the Danish Reformation, John Taussan seems to be deserving of the most conspicuous station.\* This distinguished man was admitted, while still a boy, into one of the monastic institutions with which the country abounded. His ability and love of learning recommended him to the notice of his superiors, and he was offered a sufficient allowance to enable him to take advantage of the lights of the foreign universities. The only restriction placed on him when he left his monastery was, that he should not study at Wittemberg.

Louvain, Cologne, and other academies of note, solicited the stay of the traveller; but they failed to satisfy his thirst for information on the grand points of theological inquiry. In the mean time, the works of the reformers made their way into his hands; he read

\* He is called "*Primus sanæ doctrinæ per Daniam Restaurator.*"—Pontop., t. ii., p. 774.

them with avidity; and was soon on the road to Wittenberg. There he found what he had so long panted to discover. The questions which had kept his mind in a state of feverish excitement were answered with Christian simplicity, or proved, with a noble and manly erudition, to lie beyond the province over which mere scholastic reasoning had any right to exercise control.

It appears, however, that he only allowed himself time to gain a general knowledge of the state of learning and opinion in this celebrated seminary. He returned, as speedily as the objects of his journey would permit, to the monastery in which he had been brought up. His knowledge and experience were to be devoted to its advantage; and he commenced, with laudable zeal, to open the treasures which he had amassed in his wanderings. But instead of the admiration and respect, which he naturally might expect would attend the discoveries that he came to make, he found his love of truth, his glowing expositions of its blessed and converting influences, regarded with suspicion, and himself becoming daily an object of greater dislike. This struggle continued for about two years, when his sermon on the Sabbath preceding Good Friday, roused a storm against him which was not likely to be allayed. He represented so strongly the superiority of the merits of Christ to the efficacy of mysteries; the imperfections of all human works; the uselessness of any attempt to supply their defects; and the corruptions of the Roman Church; that the monks appeared resolved no longer to keep terms with him, but to silence at once a preacher whose doctrines, it was evident, must prove fatal to their principles. The prior Eskildus was foremost in the attack; but as some danger, in these times, attended any violent proceeding against the advocates of the Reformation, he was obliged to content himself with sending Taussan to Wiburg, where, in the retired monastery of St. John of Jerusalem, it was hoped he might either lose his new enthusiasm for the gospel, or, at least, be prevented from infecting others with so dangerous a disease. But a vigorous mind, enlightened by knowledge and reflection, and quickened by the Holy Spirit,



is not to be thwarted in its purposes by means of this kind. Convinced as it beholds the increasing rancour of the world, that the cause which it has undertaken is one not wanting in the elements of good and right, it is animated with fresh courage in the very sense of its self-devotedness. The efforts made to defeat its wishes, to counteract the efficacy of its sacred aspirations to heaven; to silence the voice, or misinterpret the language, whereby it would make known to mankind the sublime revelation of the way of life, all these things serve but to excite inquiry into the mysteries of godliness, on the one side, and into those of iniquity on the other; till, filled with knowledge experimental and particular, it comes forth, armed at all points, for the contest, a spirit that could no more be confined by the bolts and bars of the world's pride or prejudice or hate, than could an angel by the walls of a dungeon.

Taussan afforded a good illustration of this truth. Instead of losing any of his ardour in the constraint which he suffered at Wiburg, the solitude fed his zeal. He made many efforts to excite the attention of the monks, and to lead them to consider the gospel. Two of them, it is said, could not resist the force of his appeals; and they embraced gladly the means of salvation. As the windows of some part of the monastery overlooked the public way, he found opportunities of speaking to the people as they passed, and almost impossible, as it must seem to us in these days, that any good should have been effected by the rare occasions thus afforded him, yet success appears to have attended his exertions; and this, at least, is certain, that the Lord blessed his efforts by fresh gifts of grace, which rendered his own heart better prepared for the work which he had to perform in a wider and more encouraging sphere of toil.\*

The views of Frederic becoming every day better developed, the evangelical clergy saw their perils and difficulties proportionably diminished. Notwithstanding all the machinations of his enemies, Taussan was to fulfil the purpose for which he had been raised up.

\* Pontoppidani, *Annales*, t. ii. B. VI. Gerdes, t. iii., p. 355.

The very jealousy with which he was observed led to this result. His animating discourses were found to produce a similar effect among the monks of St. John of Jerusalem at Wiburg to that which had attended his preaching among his former associates. Unable to discover a remedy for this evil, the prior expelled him the cloister, and Taussan found himself, for the first time in his life, abroad in the world, with the gospel committed to his charge, and the hope and wisdom which it gave for his only guide. In this situation was he placed when his merits became generally appreciated, and, instead of being left to preach the Word of God as a poor and persecuted itinerant, he was received by the people of Wiburg with affectionate respect; and some of the pastors even of the city opened their churches to him, that he might have a better opportunity to declare the message of salvation to his anxious auditors. The utmost exertion was used by his enemies to involve him in disgrace and ruin; but his influence increased every day. When the people found that violence was about to be resorted to by the higher clergy, they resolved, according to the rude spirit of the age, to meet it by a corresponding show of resistance; and they are said to have attended the preaching of the reformer provided with arms, not for their own defence so much as for his. On the King's being made acquainted with the state of affairs at Wiburg, he issued an order which prohibited any further attempt to interrupt the labours of Taussan; and he soon after appointed him regularly to the office of preacher in that town, and conferred upon him other privileges, which completely defended him from the rage of his opponents.

This excellent man found a powerful support in the sympathy and well-directed energies of George Jani, or Sadolinus, a native of Wiburg. Like others of the early reformers, he had derived his first knowledge of the gospel from the University of Wittemberg. Taussan's successful labours encouraged him to pursue the plans which he had formed for the spiritual benefit of his townsmen. At his instigation, Frederic was induced to allow the establishment of an evangelical college

in Wiburg, and the influence thus acquired, he retained throughout his life, effecting, when raised to a bishopric, still more extensive changes in favour of the Reformation.

The adoption of Lutheranism by the court was made fully known, when the ordinary days of fasting ceased to be observed, and the communion was administered in both kinds. This was publicly done at Copenhagen immediately after the King's solemn entrance; and the partition wall was thus broken down, and the broad stream of new opinion, whether for good or evil, was admitted, and allowed to overflow the land with unconquerable force. But it did not escape the observing eye of the new monarch, that that which might be securely done by a prince who cared not for the happiness or the opinions of his subjects, could not be attempted by an upright ruler without much and careful consideration. When Christiern favoured the principles of the Reformation, it was a matter of reasonable doubt, even with those most devoted to the cause, whether they might not be more injured than benefited by such patronage. If a man care not for truth or justice from his conviction of their intrinsic value, or if his own nature be not sanctified by their heavenly influence, he may become as great a tyrant in attempting to establish them, as in furthering any other cause which may tend to his present aggrandizement; and his tyranny will be not only as detestable in its particular applications, but as injurious in its immediate influences, as if it had been inspired by motives the most adverse to holiness. For truth is hereby associated in the minds of the mass of mankind with violence and oppression; and it is thenceforward regarded as either too weak to correct injustice, or as capable of being bribed into its service; a notion destructive of its best interests, and showing, that its accidental adoption by evil-minded men ought never to be hailed by its earnest worshippers as an occurrence favourable to its best and permanent interests. Frederic wisely considered that it would be better to avoid every appearance of injustice in his proceedings, although some delay might occur thereby, than to press forward



in the arrangements of a new system when the foundation would have to be laid in the feelings of an unwilling people. Both parties were indeed too occupied with their own special interests, at this time, to allow a man of moderate temper, and not possessed of that vigour of mind which carries the thoughts to the contemplation of grand general results, to determine confidently what course he ought to pursue. This is strikingly illustrated by the expressions of Paulus Eliæ. That distinguished scholar, when called upon to state his opinions respecting Lutheranism, plainly said, "that he did not consider either the party which defended, or that which resisted it, sufficiently sober, or moderate; and that each required, more or less, correction from the other." The violent abuse, and great personal danger, to which he seems to have been exposed in consequence of this expression of his sentiments, obliges a candid mind to question, whether the apostacy of which he has been accused was not more the effect of fear, lest anarchy might succeed to the reign of superstition, than any low devotion to his private interests.

Frederic having assembled the bishops and various orders of the state, solemnly exhorted the former to consider well the responsibilities of their station. He reminded them, moreover, that the doctrines of Luther had already been received in a large portion of the kingdom; and that the eyes of people were everywhere beginning to be opened to the enormities of the Romish superstition. "I do not deny," he said, "that I swore to defend the Catholic and Roman religion in these realms; but I would not have this oath interpreted, as if I intended to employ my power in supporting the fables and childish errors, which have made their way into that church in defiance of the Word of God. Who knows not what abuses and false dogmas have, in the course of time, penetrated into the sanctuary? And who will assert that either I, or my subjects, ought to obey decrees which have not their foundation on the rock that can never be shaken, the divine revelations?" I have promised by oath to protect your episcopal rank, honours and privileges, whilst you, with unwearied labour and vigilance, fulfil the duties

which belong to your office. And these, I still promise, shall be preserved inviolate. But since in these realms, not to speak of other countries, the Christian doctrine, according to the Reformation of Luther, has struck deep its roots, and could not now be torn up without much blood and slaughter, and the great injury of the country, and its inhabitants; this, therefore, is our royal will, that the Lutheran, as well as the Catholic doctrine, shall be freely allowed among us, until the holding of a general council, when I shall readily receive whatever may be piously decreed.\*

This temperate address of the monarch was highly applauded by most of the auditors, and, notwithstanding the resistance of many of the higher clergy, it was decreed, that it was free for every one to adopt which profession he chose; that no inquisition should take place on account of religion; that the King ought, by his own authority, to defend the Lutherans, who hitherto had no security, not less than the Catholics, against tyranny and oppression; that it was lawful for monks and nuns, and whosoever might belong to any order, to leave their monasteries, to take up their abode wherever they chose, and marry or remain in a state of celibacy, according to their will. The marriage of the clergy was also rendered lawful at the same time; and to cut off their immediate dependence upon Rome, it was forbidden that any bishop should receive the pall from the Pope, or exercise a power not properly limited by due obedience to the state.

These were important determinations; and though they left much still to be done, there was little to fear that, after the principles which they involved were generally understood, the nation could long remain subject to the evils of ecclesiastical misrule. The interests and the laws of truth and justice must ever be the same: those of the former may be neglected when the world is loud in its advocacy of the latter. Justice is necessary to every one, even to the most corrupt. This is universally felt. But the value of truth is less readily dis-

\* Gebhardi Geschichte der König Dänemark, t. ii., s. 792; Pontoppidani, Annales, t. ii, B. VI., c. 3.

covered, and its applications are, in reality, less directed to the present, or easily understood, advantage of individuals. The sudden change of a religion, or of religious institutions, (for they are widely different) involves, in a greater degree than any other change, the interests of both truth and justice. Had Frederic, therefore, published a manifesto declaring the establishment of Lutheranism and the abolition of the Catholic Church, he would have violated his duty towards justice as much as he would have seemingly favoured the advances of truth. Nor would truth have derived any increase from this fearful sacrifice. The sufferings of the oppressed Catholics would have been set down to the account of Protestantism; and as no argument can ever justify injuries inflicted for the conscientious profession of a particular creed, truth itself would have been compelled to bear testimony against it, and every thing in it must have been exposed to the severest scrutiny; all its arrangements, its policy and provisions, every thing, in short, but what it had derived immediately from the pure Word of God. But the soundest maxims of Christian jurisprudence were adopted by the sovereign of this comparatively small and remote province of Northern Europe. He simply provided for the establishment of liberty of conscience. No one was called upon to resign his possessions, his life or freedom, as a sacrifice to his faith; and no one was tempted to hypocrisy by the offer of splendid bribes, in the shape of offices and privileges. An example was thus set which it might have been well had prouder nations followed; but which, however neglected, admirably illustrates the best principles of the Reformation, the legitimate object of which was to purify by the living waters of truth, not to break down and consume by the machinery of a new species of revengeful tyranny. Had the latter been its purpose, or its method of operating, it would have had little harmony with the spirit of the gospel, however much it might deal with the letter of the heavenly Word. The history of the Church of Christ would have had scarcely more to do with the introduction or progress of the Reformation, than with the political revolutions of the various king-



doms upon which it has so beneficially acted. But while in Denmark it was introduced with so close an adherence to the principles of evangelical righteousness, in other countries it compelled, if not at once, yet eventually, the most obstinate enemies of the rights of conscience to yield their strong holds to the purifying light and air of heavenly charity. This was the next result most devoutly to be looked for by faithful disciples of Jesus Christ after the introduction of a true system of belief, and the establishment of a corresponding discipline. The defence of the gospel was thereby put upon its proper grounds; and systems, adverse to its genuine and converting influence, found themselves opposed not to the instruments of human power, or the contrivances of a spirit earthly as their own, but to the awful artillery of Heaven; to the Spirit of truth and holiness revealing Himself, and the decrees of the Almighty Father against all "who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

The success which attended Taussan's preaching induced the King to give him an appointment at Copenhagen. There his powerful appeals to the gospel excited an attention which afforded encouraging hopes, that the people were now no longer inspired by mere curiosity, but that a sincere desire to become acquainted with the doctrines on which their salvation depended, was beginning to animate their hearts. This improved state of feeling derived fresh nourishment from the circulation of a new version of the Psalms, and of a complete translation of the New Testament by Christiern Petri, who also having refused to leave the exiled King, employed his time in executing this noble work, and seeing it through the press at Antwerp. Former attempts had been made to render the Scriptures into Danish; but whether from ignorance of the original language, or from inexperience in composition, the authors of these early versions had not rendered them intelligible to those for whom they were intended. The use of the new translation soon became general among the people, and they were thereby enabled to test what the evangelical preachers taught them, by the infallible revelations of God. This was of infinite importance at such a season.

If there was any effort made to bias the judgment, the bribe offered was knowledge, the means of wisdom, the guidance of divine truth.

Had the two parties been sufficiently wise to remain contented with the arrangement which gave liberty to the opinions of each, without extending it to either to oppress the other, time would have so gently brought about the necessary changes, that neither clamour nor injury would have marked their occurrence. But while the Catholics considered themselves aggrieved by any attempt at reformation, the Lutherans did not refrain, it seems probable, from those instances of pride, or those bold efforts at aggrandizement, which so commonly characterize the first successes of a new party. The agitation attending this state of things was equally injurious to the peace of the country, and the interests of religion. Frederic, therefore, resolved to soften, if possible, the asperity of the dispute, by putting it out of the power of angry-minded men to interfere with the progress of improvement; but it was still not by the enactment of arbitrary laws that he contemplated this suppression of a power so obstinately adverse to the reformation of abuses; he desired to carry conviction into the hearts of the people; and to demand nothing which might not fairly and evidently be rendered as a sacrifice to holiness and truth. With this view he had recourse to the favourite method of these days, and summoned both parties to a conference.

The meeting thus proposed by the monarch was held in the year 1530, at Copenhagen. Representatives of every class and order in the nation were summoned to this important conference. The expectations of success were high on both sides. While the reformers trusted calmly to the common-sense force of their arguments on points of ecclesiastical polity, and to the testimony of Scripture for the defence of their doctrines, the Catholics looked forward to the meeting with equal confidence of success, from the power which they hoped to exercise through the force of old associations, or the awe with which men listen to denunciations made in the

name of Heaven, and with the solemnity of a long-recognized authority.

In order to render the victory more certain, the champions of the Roman Church gathered about them some of the most distinguished scholars of Cologne, a city then flourishing in accomplished divines and skilful disputants. Paulus Eliæ and other Danish theologians joined the band; and Taussan, Francis Wormord, with a numerous body of those who had newly entered the ranks of the reformers, appeared on the opposite side. To simplify the proceedings, the latter drew up a statement of their doctrines, which they introduced with an impressive declaration, that they had adopted them as immediately derivable from the revelations of the Word of God.\* “A Christian man,” said they, “can have no other guide to salvation than the teaching of Christ, which is the Holy Scripture; nor ought he to recognize any other wisdom or satisfaction than the merit, punishment and death of Christ; not, indeed, that ceremonies are altogether to be rejected, but those only which are contrary to the Word of God, and which seem to ascribe any holiness to man. The true Church is nothing else than the communion of saints, and of all those who are united to God and his Son by a sincere faith. However holy any thing else may externally appear, it ought to be esteemed of no worth or authority, since it may be adverse to the true Church, and may curse those whom God blesses, and reject those whom God receives, and designate as heretics those who teach sound doctrine, and rightly chastise the sins of fallen men.”

Pursuing this abstract of their confession, they further stated, that they believed the pretended benedictions and indulgences of men to be but as curses in the sight of God: that they acknowledged but two sacraments, considering that they who introduced more, went beyond the authority of Scripture: that marriage was holy and

\* The Danish Confession of Faith consisted of forty-three articles, agreeably to that of Augsburg. It was not confirmed directly by public authority; but since the year 1574, the Augsburg Confession has been received in Denmark as the rule of its faith and ecclesiastical constitutions.—Pontop. *Annales*, t. ii., B. VI., c. 3, p. 835; Gerdes, t. iii.; *Monument. Antiq.* p. 217.



honourable among all men, and that monastic vows were wholly vain: that the true worship of God consisted not in singing, in masses, vigils, temples, and so forth, but in a true and spiritual service, which is to believe in Him with the heart, and to confess Him with the mouth: that the true mass is "the commemoration of Christ's death and passion, in which His body is eaten, and His blood drunk, as a certain pledge that through His name we obtain remission of sins: that where that is celebrated, there a Christian ought to be a partaker, not only of the body in the bread, but of the blood in the wine, and that for his own sake as a living man; whereas that which is offered in the mass both for the dead and the living, is altogether without efficacy or meaning: that human merits and indulgences, and such like things, have no value in the sight of God, nor avail in any way, whatever the monks may affirm, to procure salvation: that bishops and priests are nothing more than ministers of God's Word; and that it is their duty to abstain from worldly cares, much more to have no concern in wars or in judicial processes, but rather to leave all such things to the secular power, to which they are themselves bound to render obedience in every lawful matter: that we ought to confess our sins before God and his Son, imploring the pardon of our offences; but that auricular confession, as hitherto received, ought to be rejected as the invention of men: that all the faithful in Christ Jesus are priests, inasmuch as they offer up themselves a living, an acceptable sacrifice to God, and teach and pray; but that, by the consent of the Church, preachers of the Word, and administrators of sacred things, ought to be elected from their number: that all slothful monks were unworthy of ecclesiastical benefices: that it was better also, in order to avoid superstition, that no images should be allowed in churches, since the simple might too easily be led to regard them with mistaken reverence: that Christ alone is the head and protector of the Church: that no other creature, whether in heaven or on earth, can claim that dignity; and that from this head there flows into all the members the stream of life and salvation."

Whatever might be said in respect to the truth of the opinions thus stated, candour would have obliged every unprejudiced mind to confess, that no slight credit for honesty was due to a party, which so freely and explicitly unfolded the whole of its sentiments for the examination of its adversary. There was evidently no wish to conceal, or present in a modified form for the trial of controversy, that which in popular preaching was exhibited in a bolder shape. But the Catholics, instead of waiting for the day when, in fair and open debate, the two creeds might be compared with each other, endeavoured to prejudice the King's judgment by presenting a series of articles, derived, it was said, from the statement of their opponents, and which, if not proved or recanted, ought to subject them to the severest punishment. Of the errors thus ascribed to the evangelical party, the principal were, that the holy Church itself had erred for thirteen or fourteen hundred years since the birth of Christ: that its ceremonies, dignities, offices, vestments, fasts, and other such things ought to be changed: that righteousness consists in faith: that God has no regard to good works, and that they do not conduce to salvation: that man has no free-will, and that whatever happens in the world could not have been otherwise: that it is impious to invoke the saints, and not less so to venerate their bones, or relics: that after death there is no redemption, or help for the soul, nor any remission of sins: that there are only two sacraments: that it is contrary to the gospel of Christ to deny the cup to the laity, and that bishops and priests who have done so ought to be accounted cheats and robbers: that all Christians are priests; that there is no external priesthood; and that, therefore, it is lawful for all who have been baptized, to consecrate the body of Christ; and do whatever else pertains to the ministers of Christ: that all the bishops of Rome, since the time of the apostles, have been Antichrists, and that, therefore, all the bishops and priests consecrated by them are not true bishops and priests, but papists only: that priests ought to marry: that the mass is not a sacrifice; that the New Testament has no peculiar sacrifice; and

that the mass, therefore, which is celebrated according to the rites of the Roman Church, is an abomination, and a crucifying of Christ afresh: that the mass profits no one, and that all the masses, therefore, the vigils, prayers, alms, and fasts, which are performed for the dead, are mere frauds and delusions: that the offerings and tenths, and such things, given in former times to monasteries and churches, were ruinously obtained from princes for no other purpose than to nourish monastic avarice: that no vows are binding on the conscience; and that the monastic life is nothing else than mere folly and deceit, agreeing neither with the doctrine of Christ, nor a good conscience; and that all monasteries, therefore, ought to be destroyed, and all vows set aside.\*

These were the articles supposed to be derivable, by direct inference, from the confession of the evangelical party. It is easy to see that a hostile hand and spirit had been employed in making the summary. But while it might have been justly urged that an arbitrator ought to be left to himself, when called upon to determine the amount of error in an instrument on which judgment has to be passed; so also might a still stronger complaint have been made at the contrivances employed to bring the whole matter under the judgment of the court, exposed to all the variations of private influence, instead of leaving it to the honest decision of an open assembly, composed of the representatives of various classes and orders, and meeting under circumstances eminently favourable to the free expression of opinion.

A reply to the representations made to the King by the Catholics, was immediately drawn up by Taussan and his associates. It throws considerable light on the chief points in dispute, and affords an interesting proof of the harmony which existed on subjects of vital importance, between the reformers of Denmark and those of Germany, England, and other countries which had received the light of the gospel. Thus the bold accusation, that they had spoken of the Church as erring

\* Pontop. Ann., t. ii., B. VI., c. iii., s. 843; Gerdes, t. iii.; Monum. Antiq. p. 232.



ever since the primitive times, is answered by the counter-statement, that the true Church of God, which is founded in Christ, as the chief corner-stone, and which is taught and illuminated by a sound faith, and endowed by the Holy Spirit, which rules and directs it in all its ways, cannot err; but that that Church, indeed, which consists entirely in external things, and in external sanctity, must perpetually err. To the assertion that they had rejected rites, ceremonies, fastings and other such things, it is plainly answered, "We reject none of them which are agreeable to the Word of God."

On the all-important doctrine of justification by faith, they say, "We are justified by faith alone; but this faith so operates in us by the internal righteousness of God, that it produces, as fruit, an internal and uncorrupt righteousness, which consists in works truly Christian. So that a living faith cannot be naked, but will continually exhibit itself in good works." In the same manner, "Salvation, and the faith which we possess, are the mere gift of God; so that it is impossible that we should deserve salvation by our good works: yet does not God despise those works which spring from a sincere faith, as is seen by the examples of Abel, Abraham, and the Centurion." Again: "Daily experience shows how little liberty of will we possess, and Scripture accordingly teaches us, that we are by nature blind, and know not God. And how should we rightly worship the being of whose proper nature we are ignorant? Wherefore Paul teaches us, that God not only perfects that which is good in us, but also creates the will whereby we are at all inclined to good; whence Christ tells us, that no man can come to Him unless the Father draw him."

These were subjects which required explanation, to prove, that no opinion was held by the party which favoured any loose notion respecting either the true Church of Christ, or the great laws of moral conduct. But there were others which demanded a simple assent, or dissent; and this the reformers appear always to have been willing to give. They never shrunk from a full statement of their opinions; and neither the temptations arising from danger to their persons, nor those which

presented themselves when, by a slight modification of doctrine, they might have appeased many powerful enemies, could induce them to resign a single point in the controversy. Thus with regard to the worship of saints, the authors of the Danish Confession observe, "These words are odious; but we have taught, and we still teach, that the sacred Scriptures nowhere tell us, that we ought to invoke those who are dead; nor do we think that we dishonour them if with the gold and the garments which now so uselessly adorn them dead, we clothe the poor and naked saints which are still alive. We confess that purgatory, since it is nowhere mentioned in Scripture, is nothing else than a dream of the monks, or an invention of the priests. In respect to the word "Sacrament," all the works of God may be so called in a loose sense; but, strictly speaking, there are two only belonging to the New Testament, that of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord; nor can any thing be more certain than that Jesus Christ gave the wine, as well as the bread, to his disciples, when he said, "Drink ye all of this:" we again and again, therefore, declare, that this part of the sacrament is denied to the laity without any reason."

That they contended for the universal priesthood of the true people of Christ, was not denied; but then they acknowledged, at the same time, that it was necessary that ministers should be set apart to perform the services of the Church; and they positively denied having called either bishops or pontiffs Antichrist, except those who had taught things contrary to the precepts of Jesus Christ. Of the marriage of the clergy they spoke in the same guarded manner; and respecting the mass, it was said, "It is most true, although this opinion may not please all, that the mass is not a sacrifice, but a memorial only of that sacrifice which Christ perfected on the cross; whereas in the mass of the Roman Church, Christ is offered as if he had not already sacrificed himself for our redemption." The practice of praying for the dead was one which obtained no indulgence with these reformers. "We repeat again and again," they said,

“that prayers, vigils, and masses for the dead, are altogether vain and useless.” Monastic vows are in the same manner declared inconsistent with Scripture; and to the statement, carefully put forth, that Taussan had ordained ministers, there is this answer, “He had not,” it is said, “consecrated priests, for that pertained to God alone; but he had, in many instances, and before the universal Church, pronounced certain men worthy of preaching the Word of God, and of administering the sacraments, and had confirmed this by imposition of hands.”\*

It is evident, from this last acknowledgment, that the Reformation in Denmark was rapidly advancing to a stage, at which either the special interference of Divine Providence, or the exercise of a no less special grace and wisdom, are necessary to the religious prosperity of mankind. We enter not here upon the discussion of episcopal rights, but simply direct attention to the dangerous condition in which any country must be placed, when the office of preaching, and of administering the most solemn mysteries of religion, is suddenly opened to the vast body of candidates, ready, in times of excitement, to take the lead in discussion. The very men who, in seasons of tranquillity, are content to pursue the even tenor of their way, anxious only to hear the truth, and cherish it as the food of their own souls, are those of whom, under the strong influence of exciting changes, the most dangerous enthusiasts are made, and who, as teachers, therefore, might be little likely to lead their hearers along the sober path of evangelical simplicity. But while there would be some danger, even with men of this class, how much more evil would certainly attend the sudden admission of those to ministerial functions, whose chief recommendation was their zeal, an admirable property, and as essential as admirable, to all effective exertion in great works, but fully as dangerous when not combined with an equal degree of knowledge and experience.

The necessity of a public conference was in no wise

\* Gerdes, *Monument. Antiq.*, t. iii., p. 237.



diminished by this untimely anticipation of its object. It was proposed, therefore, to leave things as they were, and to await the decision which might be expected from the judgment of a tribunal constituted in the best way to secure freedom from dishonesty and prejudice. But a difficulty arose at this stage of affairs, which men, anxious for the truth, could never have allowed to exist. The proper question was, whether the doctrines of the Roman Church, or those of the Lutherans, were true. It might have been supposed that the utmost eagerness would have been manifested, on both sides, to make known the reasons, and the convincing proofs, which had led to such a persevering adherence to the creed professed. At the moment, however, when the debate was to commence, an objection was raised, on the part of the Catholics, to the use of the common language; and this objection was as warmly repelled on the part of the reformers. The several arguments were urged with as much determination as if the decision of the great question itself had been at issue; and such was the feeling on the subject, that each party preferred setting the conference aside to allowing it to be carried on in the language which it had not chosen. Reasons might exist at the time with which we are not now acquainted; but it is difficult to discover, why so much care should have been employed to prevent arguments from being heard or understood by the people at large, when it was they who had chiefly to be guarded against error. To this it might be said, that error is not kept from diffusing itself among the unlearned by controversy: but this is only true when the heresies complained of are not yet familiar to the people; when they are in the keeping of schools of theologians, or the select of a party whose interest it may be to prevent their escaping into light. When already widely circulated, and discussed by men of all classes, and of every degree of ability, it must surely then be better to show, as soon as possible, that reason and Scripture are against them. To remain silent, or not to bring forth whatever arguments exist in favour of the cause, and that in as plain a form, and in

language as simple as can be employed, is to leave every thing in the hand of the enemy.\*

When the Lutherans found that it was vain to expect a public discussion of their opinions, they presented another apology to the King. In this they carefully excused themselves from the charge of having treated the office of the higher clergy with disrespect. "We do not deny," they said, "that the bishops are men of noble birth, good men, and apt for political council; but the very quarrel which we have against them arises from this, that while they bear the name of bishops, they perform not any of the duties of the office, as described in Scripture."

The firmness of the King, at this period, was strikingly shown, by his compelling one of the most refractory of the prelates to pay a fine, because found guilty of resisting the royal ordinance. In justifying himself for this proceeding, he said, that "he had no prejudice in favour of either Luther or any other man, but regarded those only, without respect to names, who devoted themselves to the defence of the truth, the especial duty of the bishops, whether that truth was derived from the Church of Rome or the Lutherans, and to the support of which he was himself bound, whence-soever it might come."

In this manner did the cautious, but not inergetic or undetermined monarch pursue his course. A bolder prince might sooner have subdued the obstacles which stood in the way of the Reformation, but he could not have demonstrated so well the wisdom or the justice of the measure. Remote as the events in Danish history are from ordinary contemplation, there are few chapters in the history of the sixteenth century better calculated

\* The Danish annalist suggests that the use of Latin was insisted upon on account of the divines from Cologne. This argument, however, was not employed by the party concerned; but he adds, that it was only left in silence because the Catholics were ashamed to own that they could not defend themselves. It is but fair to remark here, that this would make nothing against their church. If they were themselves unable to dispute with learning and ability, they only acted rightly by their cause to engage better advocates. But the wish of Paulus Eliæ to confine Tausson to Latin could not be explained in this way.—Pontop. Annal., t. ii., B. VI., c. 3, p. 346.

to throw light on the temper in which the most useful of the mighty changes here spoken of were brought to pass. In some circumstances, the similarity between the progress of the Reformation in our own country and in this is striking and obvious; but the difference of government made also a wide difference in many important particulars. Denmark had only to contend with a hierarchy which was beginning to be odious in the sight of the nation, and which, however powerful, had never struck its roots into the constitution of the state. The King had but to set up his authority as a rival to that of the bishops, and to seize upon their fortresses, to put an end to the struggle; but in England the Church stood on firmer foundations, and was no more to be shaken than the monarchy itself. This rendered it necessary that the direct exercise of power should be less manifest, and that a far more lengthened preparation of the popular mind should take place, before any of those changes could be effected which were to re-establish the gospel as the rule of faith.

The determination of Frederic to place himself at the head of the Church, was further shown, by his obliging a bishop, whose election he himself favoured, to pay him, as sovereign, six thousand florins for his pall. This money had hitherto been paid to the Pope, and it might have been expected that, with the separation from Rome, the clergy would have ceased to be called upon for the taxes which had been imposed by the Pontiff; but it was probably concluded, that so long as their revenues were not greatly diminished, they ought to be chargeable with the same payments as before; and few could be found who would deny, that it was fair and reasonable, that if the money had been willingly paid to a foreign potentate, it should be at least as gladly bestowed for relieving the burdens of the state at home.\*

In Denmark, the monks formed the same strong battalion in the armies of the Roman Church as in other countries. When the people, therefore, began to feel

\* It was said of this bishop by the Roman-Catholic writers, "*Hic pontificatum suum, se aureorum millibus commercabatur a profano rege.*"—Pontop., t. ii., p. 824.



more deeply interested in the progress of reform, a collision between their new enthusiasm and the stern devotion, or the selfish plans of the inmates of the monasteries, became inevitable. The former had been taught, that so soon as the religious orders should be dispersed, not only would light break in upon many a province hitherto lost in darkness, but institutions would arise, destined to secure to their children's children the happy fruits of knowledge and true piety. It was in the town of Malmöe that the first and strongest demonstration of this kind took place. The inhabitants had received with thankfulness the instructions of the evangelical preachers; they had acknowledged their gratitude by manifesting, on every occasion, their desire to return to those rites and practices which seemed best calculated to strengthen them in the belief of the gospel, and the fulfilment of its dictates. The usual resistance was made to these proceedings, and the monks were foremost in the opposition. Having had long experience of their conduct, which it may be conjectured, from these events, had not been fitted to secure the respect of the people, the chief persons in the town proposed to eject them from their monastery. This was no sooner named than done; and mere popular feeling effected in this instance, what in other cases it required many years to execute. That some injustice and even cruelty was perpetrated when such proceedings took place, most honest minds will suspect, and not refuse to acknowledge their suspicions: but an appeal was made to the King immediately after this expulsion of the monks of Malmöe, for a justification of the act. He was not an unwilling listener to apologies of this nature. Even an honest and impartial mind will be thankful to receive proofs in favour of opinions agreeable to its wishes; and appearances may be against it when the common principles of nature are fairly on its side. The people of Malmöe, however, came with a petition which no prince could refuse to receive, unless indeed he had adopted the maxim, that he could more easily govern his subjects, and better fulfil his duty to God, while they remained profoundly sunk in ignorance, than he dare hope to do when they

had been exalted to a proper sense of their moral and spiritual responsibilities. With the resources in their hands from the revenues of the monastery, the good citizens of Malmö were able to establish a gymnasium for the education of their clergy. The granting of the request, in this instance, encouraged similar proceedings, and in a short time the monasteries were everywhere shaken to their very foundations. Hospitals, almshouses, schools, rapidly succeeded to these institutions, and the cause of charity was promoted to an extent which would have filled every enlightened and benevolent mind with joy, could it be made apparent, that no suffering was inflicted, no miseries entailed on the exiled monks, many of whom, there is reason to believe, must have had little to do with the guilt of the institutions under which they had been educated.\*

The controversy concerning the nature of the mass was boldly entered upon by Paulus Eliæ, and as readily followed up by Taussan. In the year 1531 the former published his treatise, entitled, "A Short Introduction to the Holy Mass against its new Adversaries:" the introduction to this work is chiefly occupied with abuse of the Lutherans. "Many of the citizens of Copenhagen," says the author, "have expressed their surprise, that no answer has been returned to the proud insults vented by those doctors of your city whom you call evangelical preachers. They speak indeed with an affection of sincere concern for both body and soul, which they represent as in danger of perishing; but all this reformation is infirm and false, and only invented to deceive the people by the false pretence of being intended to aid them in the pursuit of eternal salvation." A challenge to Taussan concludes the treatise; and, which will sound somewhat extraordinary to controversialists in these days, the magistrate is called upon to insist that the answer should be in Latin. But the dispute was

\* Pontoppidani Annales, t. ii., B. VI., c. iii., p. 825.—Some of the most distinguished men in the evangelical Church were successively appointed to the offices of professors and heads of the college of Malmö. The cause of the Reformation was in few instances more surely promoted than by the establishment of institutions of this nature. The opposite party had a double loss in the success of the present application.

interrupted by the irregularity with which the several rejoinders issued from the press. This was the case with most of the attempts to settle the affair by argument. The Catholics, especially, complained that they were not fairly treated, and that it was in vain to expect any good from disputes, the decision of which was to be placed in the hands of prejudiced judges. This was the very answer uniformly rendered by the Protestants when desired to acknowledge the authority of the Council of Trent; an answer which, given by whatever party, ought to be regarded as in every respect reasonable, till the objections on which it is founded be fairly removed. "We appeal," said the prelates, and other orders of the Roman clergy in Denmark, "to the authority of the Roman See, and thence to a general council of all Christendom."

While the reformers had to defend themselves against these more open adversaries, they found it necessary also to guard against the dangerous pretensions of others who affected to be anxious for reform, though not the reform which had Luther for its author, or the Bible, or the principles of Christian truth for its object.\* The address of some of the Romish clergy to the King sounded the alarm, and active measures were immediately employed by Taussan and others to prove how little the monarch, if earnest in the reformation of the Church, ought to be influenced by the persuasions of such a party. A still further addition was made to their labours, by the attempts of Melchior Hofmann to draw away the people from their sober-minded teachers, to listen to his violent and enthusiastic discourses. Like many of those who separated themselves from the main body of the reformers to take a path of their own, Hofmann is represented as having exhibited, at the beginning of his career, proofs of spiritual feeling, and sincere affection for the truth. His own natural ardour of temperament was unfortunately aided by the devotion of numerous followers, who spoke of him as a

\* These proposals received the name of the Interim, and were made by Joachim Römow, bishop of Roschild.—Pontop. Ann., t. ii., p. 860; Gerdes, t. iii., p. 388.



prophet, and listened to his preaching as the voice of Heaven. The fierceness with which he was attacked by Amsdorf, and other Lutherans, was scarcely less favourable to the encouragement of his enthusiasm. When, at length, his opinions had obtained sufficient credit to alarm the evangelical clergy for the safety of their flocks, the King prudently resolved to invite one of the German divines to meet Hofmann, and obtain from him a full exposure of his sentiments, and of the reasons on which he held them. Bugenhagen \* was chosen for this task ; and the two polemics met in the presence of the enlightened and amiable prince Christian. It does not appear, from the report of the conference, that Hofmann could be so fairly convicted of error in doctrine, as of being guilty of dividing and agitating a people, whom it was now the especial object of most good men to preserve in a state of unity, and humble inquiry. The main difference between him and the rest of the reformers, consisted in his views of the sacrament, which were the same as those entertained by the party now rising in Belgium, and an exaggeration, perhaps, of those of Zuinglius. So little had the spirit of the Reformation penetrated the hearts of some of its Danish champions at this time, that they proposed to the prince, that Hofmann ought to be sent to the gallows, or the rack, and treated, in every way, like the hated Anabaptists. But even the sentence of exile was resisted by the wiser portion of the assembly, and Hofmann, after a brief sojourn in Hamburg, recanted his supposed errors, and, with many tears, publicly sought pardon for his faults in the church of St. Peter.†

Every day now added to the strength of the Lutherans. The people became more alive to the vast benefits promised by the contemplated changes ; and thus an impulse was given, far more rapid in its operations than that of truth itself, but leading to consequences of a very different nature. Most of the monastic institutions

\* Or, Pomeranus, as he is more frequently styled.

† Pontop. Ann., t. ii., s. 828. Gerdes, t. iii., p. 372.

were by this time placed under the sweeping law of confiscation. But the royal authority was interposed to prevent the revenues from being wasted ; and as schools and hospitals arose as quickly as the convents disappeared, the sentiment of religion and charity was still kept uppermost, and the violence practised at first was tacitly rebuked. The popular passions, however, were gathering strength ; and the churches which still remained to the Catholics were broken into and shamefully dismantled. This was done under the pretence of destroying the images—a proof that much had still to be effected before the multitude could be taught to understand the real force of the gospel, or of the blessed influence of the heavenly Spirit when truly received. Forgetting that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God, they threw down images which in a little time would have demonstrated by their own fall the presence of the Lord ; and a rude, savage disposition was created in the operation, as opposed as any can be to the converting grace of true religion.

Frederic died in the year 1533, and, though less bold than many other princes in carrying forward the Reformation, he appears to have possessed, in an eminent degree, the virtues of a sound mind and great faithfulness to the truth. His son, and successor, Christian, entertained more extensive views ; and determined on the means of attaining them with a less calculating spirit. The measures he had prepared were intended to secure the reformers in the safe enjoyment of their newly acquired privileges ; and to teach the fallen hierarchy of the Roman Church, that secret machination would avail them as little as the rejected opportunities of public conference. But Christian had nearly lost his kingdom by his hostility to the Catholic clergy. Both his brother and the exiled King were set up as claimants to the free choice of the people ; and for three years the Protestants saw themselves ready to fall into the hands of their almost triumphant enemies. The details of the war which followed belong not to this place. By the Providence of God, Christian was at length successful,

and, after a severe siege, Copenhagen opened its gates, and received him as its sovereign.\*

This attempt of the Catholic party cost a fearful expenditure of life and treasure, and proved the ruin of its chiefs. The bishops concerned in the affair were seized, thrown into prison, and there kept till, humbled by misfortune, they agreed to resign their dignities, and pass for the remainder of their days a private life. Joachim Rönnow was the only one who would not sign these conditions, and his captivity was terminated but by death. The confiscation of the episcopal revenues added greatly to the income of the crown, and the means of the Protestant party for increasing its own establishments. Accusations, however, were not wanting to fix the charge of sacrilege upon the King; and it would, perhaps, be difficult to repel a charge, the only proof of which that can be fairly demanded is, that the whole of the wealth confiscated was not employed in the service of religion.

Not a hope now remained for the defeated party, and the monks, who continued attached to their several orders, began to emigrate in vast numbers. The mendicants were among the foremost in this retreat. To such of the other orders who chose to remain in Denmark some indulgence was allowed, and they were not compelled to change their profession. The parochial clergy were inspected with rigorous care, and they were obliged either to resign their offices, or conform to the new doctrines. When these arrangements had been made, the King assembled the people, in the marketplace of Copenhagen, and from a stand, erected for the purpose, addressed them, in a familiar speech, on the subject of the late events. At the conclusion of his address, the chancellor read the charges made against the bishops; and the people were asked, "Whether they wished them brought back, or would have others appointed in their stead?" To this question the multitude replied, with shouts and exclamations, that they would have no such bishops, but would remain faithful

\* Gebhardi Geschichte König Dän., t. ii., s. 837; Pontop. Annal., t. ii., s. 388 Gerdes, t. iii., p. 404.



to the gospel, and that they wished the confiscated treasures to be put into the public chest to assist them in their necessities.\*

Successors to the vacant sees were immediately appointed, but they received only the title of superintendents till the death of the deposed prelates. The advice of Luther and Melancthon was sought, respecting the best mode of establishing a new constitution for the Church, and Bugenhagen was recommended as well qualified for carrying their plans into execution. The new arrangements were rightly adapted to secure the diligence of the clergy, and the choice of such only for any sacred office who were prepared by piety and learning, for the right performance of its duties. So minute were the directions drawn up, that a particular article was devoted to the dress of the clergy; and this especially, was insisted upon at subsequent meetings of the Danish synod, with an earnestness which shows how important it was considered. The desire of the King to procure sound and useful instructors for his people, and to prevent them from being exposed to the loose fancies of vain pretenders, is seen in the words of part of the ordination service: "Above all things," it is said, "let the doctrine of justification be much insisted upon, so that every one may understand what it is, and how it is effected. We would also name some other points on which we wish preachers to insist, that their discourses may not wander hither and thither, as if they had neither head nor tail. The chief articles to be spoken of are those which concern the law, and the fear of God; the gospel and faith in God; penitence and the cross; good works; free-will, and Christian liberty. . . . That the preachers may not distract simple minds, we would have them take especial heed to avoid unprofitable discussions, and to be cautious if they speak of the eternal prescience of God, or of Christian liberty, or of the freedom of the will, or any other subject surpassing man's weak understanding, not to attempt to throw

\* "Thus," says the chronicler, "did the papacy receive its eternal good night."—Pontop., t. ii., p. 898. Gebhardi, *Geschichte der König Dänemark*, t. ii., p. 839.

light on that which is involved in impenetrable darkness. Let them pray, on the other hand, for divine illumination, and direct the people's minds to the recollection of their sins, and the necessity of pardon." \*

These efforts appear to have been crowned with success; and the constitution of the Church was finally established by a decree of the state, in 1539. The institution of some noble seminaries of learning tended greatly to secure the permanence of the improvements thus commenced. Men of long experience and well-tried piety were appointed to the chief offices in the Church,† and an exemplary desire was manifested, on all sides, to promote the glory of God, and the general circulation of his Word. Some difference of opinion prevailed among the clergy, on points connected with the questions agitated in Germany and Switzerland; but they had the good sense not to divide the Church of their country, by insisting that there must not only be one heart and one mind respecting the saving doctrines and duties of the gospel, but that the same uniformity must prevail on every subject on which a question could be framed. The conduct of the Danish princes has been deservedly praised. Even Christiern II. did what he attempted in favour of the Reformation, with no slight degree of firmness; but his immediate successors on the throne afforded grand examples of prudence and Christian excellence.‡ The history of the Church of Christ presents but few chapters which could admit of being examined with more particularity than that which speaks of the Danish Reformation. It affords, it is true, but little to excite a powerful sympathy, or to engage the imagination in drawing pictures of daring, or intense suffering; but it marks the progress of light in first awakening, and then subduing and converting, a nation hitherto corrupt

\* Pontop., t. iii., B. VII., c. i., p. 53.

† Taussan, after having exercised the functions of minister and theological professor at Roschild, was made Bishop of Ripens, in 1342.—Gerdes, t. iii., p. 412.

‡ This is mentioned in the Memoirs of Molesworth. That writer says, "The princes of Denmark, unlike those of England, had but one object to pursue, and did not allow themselves to be driven to and fro by the struggles of parties and factions, and the instigations of selfish interest." The Danish historian has quoted this testimony with great pride.—Pontop. Ann., t. iii., s. 60.

and rude. The results have been less evidently connected than those which have sprung from the Reformation in other countries, with the loftier efforts of European policy; but though, on that account, not so interesting to the world, they can be but little less so to the believer. He sees in them the success of the preaching of the gospel, and a converted kingdom returning its thanksgivings for all the knowledge and real liberty enjoyed, to the heavenly Author of its faith.

The southern parts of Norway yielded to Christian III. soon after his peaceable accession to the Danish throne; but the northern provinces, excited to resistance by Olaus, Bishop of Drontheim, had to pass through the furnace of civil war, before they could be brought to acknowledge his authority. In little more than a year, however, the whole country submitted to his sway, and the Church, like that of Denmark, was placed under new superintendents or bishops. In Iceland a longer delay took place, but it was finally brought to consent to the changes which had bestowed so many blessings on the rest of the kingdom.

The review which has here been taken of many of the principal events immediately preceding the opening of the Council of Trent, or its passing those important decrees which separated, as by a wall of adamant, the Church of Rome from all the rest of Christendom, will awaken in the minds of thoughtful men many anxious reflections. It is not enough for the Christian that he knows and feels within himself the onward step of a merciful Providence; the progressive development of sublime mysteries, which, in their expansion, like the outspreading wings of a glorious morning, leave nothing untinged with light. He cannot, we have observed, conceal from himself, that some of the most beneficial changes have been brought about by those who had no sincere love for the truth, and who were left in darkness themselves, while they shouted in the triumphs of victory, because they had won the liberty of truth for others. He cannot refuse to acknowledge that means were often resorted to, the employment of which rendered it doubtful what spirit could be at work in the minds of those who



adopted such a course. The traces of partiality are too frequent, and too deeply marked, to be excused on the score of an unconscious prejudice; and the special pleading of facts, arranged for the occasion, and not left to speak for themselves, is often a startling feature in the documents to which the ecclesiastical historian must turn for some of his most important illustrations. These things are no slight drawbacks to the pleasure with which the ardent lover of truth, the soul deeply devoted to the cause of Christ's gospel, follows step by step the eventful history of the sixteenth century. The return of light, the republication of doctrines so calculated to convince the world of unrighteousness, and of its danger, would have produced a general change, it might have been supposed, not only in the form of churches, in the name and vestments of their ministers, but in the spirit and character of mankind. When there is so little to prove that this was really the case, the believer, unskilled in the statistics of the world, as the subject of the Christian dispensation, feels half inclined to despair, and to regard with too greatly diminished admiration the wonderful changes that have just been contemplated. How little, he sometimes thinks, does it matter, whether the Bible be allowed to men or not, when, under both circumstances, no heed is given either to its precepts or its spirit! How little has a Reformation done, which leaves the mass of mankind as far from a Saviour as ever, and which is valued by the greater part of those who speak in its praise, chiefly for the very things which it would most deprecate; an unlicensed and vicious liberty of thinking and acting, a bold disregard of venerable examples, a haughty disdain of rightful authority, a reckless delight in ever repeated attempts to find out new paths, and set up new guides, to that happiness which the doctrines of the gospel teach us, by a revelation as old as the first man, can only be found in Christ.

It is, indeed, a melancholy reflection, that so little is effected where so much seemed possible; but we hope, in the subsequent parts of our narrative, to clear away many of these doubts. The retrospect of the early days

of the Reformation is fraught with lessons of the highest importance to the Church. A lecture was read in those times which ought to be remembered as the language of Divine Providence, or as an apocalypse, written not in words but in events, and addressed not only to the churches as then existing, but for the warning of those that should be intrusted with the gospel to the latest ages of the world. The seed of a great harvest has been sown: the greater the number of reapers required, and the greater need of diligence.

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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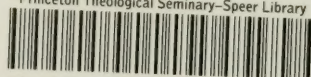






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